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FROM MOZART TO MARIO.

Reminiscences of Half a Century.

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BY

LOUIS ENGEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
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1886.

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PREFACE.

EVERY little volume which an author sends out to seek its fortune in the world is a child sent forth with its father's best wishes. The father may think he gave the child a good education, good advice what to say, and how to behave under certain circumstances; but it always depends very much on the kind way in which people will receive and patronize the child, how it will get on in life. To the ladies' kind heart, therefore, I recommend this baby; look at it with sympathy, it is sure to take to you kindly, and maybe its babbling will amuse. It has learned a little about this and that: it has learned, if that be any recommendation, to speak the truth, an effort neither easy nor always gratifying, but the honest endeavour may meet with recognition all the more that the author has less to gain by it than the reader.

I have tried to let the child say what it knows, not in a pretentious, dry manner, but naturally; and being

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told when I was myself a child that he gains the day who 'miscuit utile dulci,' I have tried to mix the amusing with the more historical element. Do, please, find it very interesting, very instructive, full of new and unrevealed facts, a most desirable book that 'ought to be found on every table.' It would be so kind of you to spoil the child and make it quite conceited. The struggle of life is hard enough, and the child has yet to find out later on that it must still deserve the early friend's kindness. If this work come to a second, third, or even a fourth edition, and its little sins of commission or omission are most carefully looked to, and it then appears before the world an improved and regenerated man, you will be proud to know that it is to your indulgence, to your kind reception, that the result is due, over which you will be sure to rejoice with its grateful, happy

Father,

LE

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MUSICAL CELEBRITIES.

COMPOSERS.

AUBER.

THE nation *la plus spirituelle du monde* counts amongst its greatest composers Daniel François Esprit Auber, whose Christian name, 'Esprit,' seems to have been a favourable omen for one of the most *spirituel* musicians who ever delighted the public, not only of France but of the whole world, by refined, harmonious, and witty music, if I may so term it.

Mozart began writing as a mere child, and was barely thirty-five years old when he died, yet he left an admirable library of masterpieces of sacred, operatic, instrumental, and vocal works. Rossini's rapid working was entirely due, not to his activity, but to his idleness, because he left everything to the last moment,

and was then compelled to write so rapidly, only too eager to return to his beloved 'doing nothing.' He gave up writing when he was a little over thirty. Auber began serious work when he was nearer forty than thirty; in fact, his first opera—not a success—was produced when he was thirty-seven years old. He had the good sense to live to eighty-nine, and thereby made up for the time which he had lost at the beginning of his life.

At Paris I remember having seen Heine, the poetical singer, or the singing poet, whose verses were so melodiously written that music for them arose spontaneously in the mind of many a composer while he read them. Théophile Gautier, who translated the verses, had such respect for their inimitable *esprit*, that he never tried to rhyme his translation, but only to lend his French expression to the ideas. In English there are many good translations, but especially one by Julian Fane, the genial brother of the present Earl, the son of that art-loving Count Westmoreland who founded the Royal Academy of Music. To Heine then I went, to see

the inspired bard who had sung better than any contemporary poet the sufferings and blessings of love :

> 'Die Engel nennen es Himmelsfreud',
> Die Teufel nennen es Höllenleid,
> Die Menschen die nennen es Liebe.'

'The angels,' he says, 'call it heaven's delight, the devil calls it Hades' fright, but men call it—Love.' I well remember when I saw him whose eternal theme was this sweet disease of youth, and he could no longer boast the curly hair and silky moustache of the young lover; I was fully prepared to see him with a stern look, having long passed the years of folly. But how did I find him? Old, shrivelled, dried-up, with a large green shade over one eye, the other protruding and barely seeing, stretched on the floor with a cushion under his head, and a counterpane over the short, thin legs, a thorough invalid, yet receiving me in the kindest manner, and full of spirit and sarcasm on his own condition. While we were talking about the immense popularity of his 'Buch der Lieder,' he said, 'Popularity is very fine,

but what little of it I may possess, I get only because I live in Paris. The Germans will not let their own great men enjoy celebrity before they are dead.' 'And how,' said I, 'did Goethe live, distinguished by every mark of favour that sovereign or nation could bestow on him?' 'Goethe,' he said, 'was too clever to die before he attained all he wished. An octogenarian succeeds at last, but I can't wait so long; I am rather pressed for time.' Poor man! he told me that in the night just past he had suffered very much. He could not endure anyone to be in the room with him in the dark, and he wanted only a glass of water to be left within reach, in case he should want it when awake during the night. That glass, it seems, was not exactly at the usual place, and when he reached for it, he upset it, and there he was, thirsty, alone, unable to call, not strong enough to grope his way to the bell, and condemned to wait till morning to get a drop of water. He was indeed, as he said, pressed for time, because a month after this conversation he was dead. Auber's *esprit* to live up to eighty-nine and give his contemporaries time enough

to let him enjoy *les grandeurs et jouissances de la gloire*, reminds me of Heine's words that he could not wait so long.

Auber was born in 1782—not, as many biographers have it, in 1784—at Caen, where his mother was on a travelling visit. His grandfather had been appointed *Décorateur des carrosses de Louis XVI.* Imagine what a responsibility for the peace of the State. Decorator of the King's carriages, forsooth! The times, however, were not Royalist. A storm began to blow which made Royalty lose its equilibrium, and Papa Auber with all his dignities had to flee for his life, until Napoleon I., the very *enfant de la Révolution*, seized the sceptre. The Aubers then came back, and, instead of carriage decoration, established a *commerce de gravures*. Auber's father had been a suspect during the Revolution, on account of his connection with the Court, and his being established in the street which to this day is called La Rue des Petites Ecuries. Very fond of music, far from opposing his son's inclination, he took him to a master, Monsieur Landurner, who gave young Daniel violin lessons. The name

of this professor has a dreadful German sound but Germans have from time immemorial been good instrumental teachers, and young Auber made good use of his time, and rapid progress. A violin concerto which he composed later on, was the result of these studies. His first work had been a *cahier de romances*, to please the ladies whom he knew, and by whom he was known as an amateur. Rather timid, and not meeting with much success in these songs, he got tired of music, and asked his father to get him an introduction to some great *commerçant;* but when he was established behind a desk with a big ledger on it, book-keeping became so tedious to him that he was suddenly taken with a desire to study business and the English language in London; and, procuring numbers of introductions, to London he went with a friend of his.

When he arrived in the English metropolis he was much interested in the auburn hair and the fair faces of the ladies, so he decided to leave the commercial studies to his friend, simply burned all his business introductions, and sacrificed on the altar of

grace and beauty all that his talent enabled him to lay at their feet. If I may be allowed to step out of the regular progression from child to boy, and boy to man, I may say that his perpetual noting down of little melodies gained him the reputation of a composer of 'small' music; but, as Rossini said, 'He may write small music, but he writes it like a great and accomplished musician.' It is well known that in the same way Catalani said of Sontag: 'Her *genre* is small, but she is great in her *genre*.' When one comes to compare what one artist says of another, there is not always such fair and kind impartiality as Rossini showed to Auber. Even Beethoven, whose misfortune it was to have flown so far before his time that his contemporaries could barely follow him, when asked his opinion about Rossini, said he might have been somebody if he had only made serious studies (*wenn er was gelernt hätte*). Yet that same Beethoven, that recognised colossus among composers, was once discussed by Kreutzer and Habeneck: by the very Kreutzer, the violinist, whose name he has immortalized in his so called

'Kreutzer Sonata;' and by Habeneck, the man who thirty-five years ago introduced Beethoven's symphonies to the Conservatoire audiences, and most undoubtedly secured the best possible performances of them ever given in any country. Only he instituted these performances after Beethoven's death, and the conversation alluded to took place in 1820, when Beethoven was all but unknown in France. Habeneck then asked Kreutzer, 'What do you think of Beethoven?' 'In what respect?' asked Kreutzer. 'Why, as a composer,' said Habeneck. 'Oh, a poor fool who will never do anything worth preserving!' replied the man whose very existence would already be forgotten had he not had the great luck to be 'preserved' under the wings of the man whose every bar has survived a whole army of executants.

One of Auber's biographers says that Auber composed without study, because he was better served 'by a natural instinct than by sustained application to study.' A very strange assertion, seeing that the same biographer speaks of a conversation between Cherubini, the director of the Paris Conservatoire, and

Auber's father, who took young Daniel to that great composer to learn whether there was any serious hope for the muscial career of his son, and received the following reply, which I wish could be engraved in marble for all students, however undeniable their disposition and talent: 'Undoubtedly your son has a gifted nature, and if properly developed he may attain a very high position. But before all, he will have to unlearn all he has until now considered the proper way of writing, and he must begin from A to work and study, and go through a regular training and musical education, or he will never do any solid work.' Until then he had led the agreeable life of a romance writer for the sake of romance, because he preferred being happy to being celebrated. Was he right or wrong? I will not take upon me to decide the question. Schiller, the great German poet, speaks of a king who on his death-bed was asked by his successor, 'You have seen life in its every aspect. You have had every enjoyment and every pleasure. What is now, as the curtain falls, your opinion of the great drama?' To which the dying king replies, 'Hearty

contempt for everything that seemed to me great or desirable.' Being happy is so relative, that whilst one person is happy in a barrel for a house, and has no other favour to ask of a king than to step aside, so as not to intercept the sun's rays; another, surrounded with every blessing, position and wealth, which a throne can procure, dies, despising all that had seemed to him desirable or exalted, and coveted in life. Auber, then, preferred being happy to earning or working for a great and celebrated name. His father, however, was not of the opinion that fooling away life in order to please the ladies was a worthy existence, and he compelled his son to look life seriously in the face, and work for the career that *miscuit utile dulci*, 'that gave him wealth and glory, and nevertheless left him leisure' enough to sacrifice his artistic offerings on the altar of any admired beauty.

The first step which Auber took as a composer was not very practical. He wrote for the then well-known violoncello player Lamarre, a certain number of concertos, which he allowed Lamarre to sign as the composer. Having thus taken unto himself the glory of

the work, Lamarre was not scrupulous enough to trouble young Auber with accounts or payments, or other such tedious proceedings. He was practical and logical, and having kept Auber's merit to himself, he kept the eventual payment for the same too, which made the affair more complete, and saved Auber the bother of counting and calculating, an occupation against which his artistic nature revolted, and which therefore Lamarre was generous enough to undertake himself. Auber wrote a concerto, too, for the violinist Mazas, which had so great a success that his father said to him, 'Malheureux, si tu n'écris pas pour le théâtre, je te maudis.' Finding, as I said before, that the *salons* and their amusement offered no compensation worth speaking of for his talent, he began his studies under Cherubini seriously, and then he composed a *messe à quatre voix*, which although successful was never published, except the Agnus Dei, which he used as the prayer in 'Masaniello.'

In 1813 he came out with 'Le Séjour militaire,' which brought him neither laurels nor a heavy cheque. This opera, either on account of very grave political events, or

because the composer was not known enough, was soon forgotten, and from 1813 to 1819 Auber did nothing but run to the librettists, begging for a new book. 'And did you,' a friend asked him, 'submit your desire only to the great authors?' 'Great and small,' he said, 'I went to everybody patiently every day for six years, nearly as long as Jacob served for Rachel, but I did not even acquire a Leah—nobody had confidence in my talent.' He went, among others, to a Monsieur Planard every day, rain or sunshine, cold or hot, and when at last he got a little piece—'Le Testament et les Billets-doux'—he failed entirely. Everybody instantly said at Paris, where nothing succeeds like success, and where a failure is a man's moral death: 'What can you expect form a *freluquet* who does nothing but run after the ladies? *He will never do any good.*' Then his father died, supposed to be very rich, but without leaving him a penny; and necessity, that great mother of great work and great invention, compelled him to do better. And he did better. In 1820 he produced 'La Bergère Châtelaine,' his first success. At last! Of his previous

opera a kind friend had written: 'In the music there are no noisy effects—it is written with a *sagesse extrême*.' And that *was* a merit, for, young composers usually overstep the line, in the direction of loud instrumentation. They are always afraid of not being sonorous enough, and the brass and the drums are worked as if by steam-power. It was therefore great good sense which kept Auber within bounds. Yet the *Journal des Débats*, then the great oracle in France, published only one line of cutting sharpness; 'La musique est d'un jeune homme!' That was all. Not another word!

His first success was therefore all the more important for a man thirty-eight years old, when it is considered that Rossini had already ceased to write long before he reached that age, and covered with glory. Auber achieved another success in 1821 with 'Emma.' But the critics of the time not only felt disinclined to risk any great praise for a man who had only had some *succès d'estime*, and whom it was perhaps not 'safe' to praise; but when Castil Blaze (who had an opinion of his own, and the courage to express it whether he

stood alone or not) said that 'the music was *spirituelle* and dramatic,' that it was 'the great and good school of music,' they attacked him so violently, for being the only prophet among them, that he wrote in answer, 'Messieurs, please agree among yourselves; I am assailed by one side for patronizing foreigners, by the other for being governed only by my patriotic zeal. I say that the music of Monsieur Auber is charming, melodious, well-written, and the time will come when you will all say the same.' And the time did come, we all know that. The success of a little opera written for amateurs ('Julie'), had such an effect upon the singers, that one and all proposed to carry him on their shoulders from the theatre. This was, so to say, his first triumph. There is, however, an incident connected with this performance which I shall take good care not to pass over.

During the dress rehearsal of the little opera ('Julie') which he had written in one week, he saw one of the amateurs who played the fiddle in that small orchestra staring so fixedly at a very handsome girl who sang on

the stage, that he held his bow immovably on the violin without playing a note. After having observed him awhile, Auber approached him politely and said, 'It seems to me that you are not exactly playing in time?' 'Ah,' said the amateur, '*vous croyez?* I must tell you candidly that I paint a little, and when I see such a pretty model, with such a pure complexion, I admire her above all.' The name of this amateur who painted 'a little' was Ingres, and from that day, for fifty-two years, he and Auber remained great friends. I may here mention a circumstance which I heard from Ingres himself, and which teaches a good lesson to students of this age. Ingres told me that for a great many years before he dared to sketch anything like a figure, he was compelled to design nothing but lines, circles, and mathematical outlines. When he began to sketch figures he was again kept for years to the inanimate, before he was permitted to sketch from nature; and before he dared to take a palette in his hand and paint in oils, no less than seven years passed. Only thus are great artists developed; and as it is with one art so it is with another. It

is because so few pupils will take the trouble seriously to study, thoroughly to learn, and slowly but steadily to advance, that we have and shall have less and less great singers. In the Paris Conservatoire they must remain six years, or they are not admitted to the competition for prizes. Since the acquiring a first or even a second prize gives the advantage of an immediate engagement at some lyric theatre, the pupils take good care not to lose their opportunity. If we had a great musical college in England where whoever was found on examination to be worthy, would be instructed gratis, on condition that he or she should submit to the rules of the institution, and should regularly attend the classes until the moment arrived to compete for the first prize, we should attain great results, for voices and intelligence are not lacking. It is the perseverance which is wanting, the eagerness to rush before the public which is ruinous. The moment they can sing a trumpery ballad and earn two guineas the pupils seem to think themselves authorized to give up studying; thus preventing talents, otherwise capable of earning

fortunes, and becoming the glory of their country, from developing into that artistic completeness which cannot be obtained in any art without long and hard work.

Necessity made Auber work, and he was at last rewarded, for he was once politely approached by Scribe, who asked his permission to use a *romance* of his in a new play.* The acquaintance once made, they worked a long lifetime together.

Auber in one year (1823) achieved two successes: 'Leicester' first, 'La Neige' afterwards. If proof was needed of the

* The two letters are rather remarkable for shortness and courtesy. Scribe wrote:

'Monsieur, voulez-vous me permettre de placer, dans un vaudeville que j'écris en ce moment pour le théâtre de Madame, votre ronde si jolie et si justement populaire de *la Bergère Châtelaine?* Je ne vous cacherai pas, monsieur, que je me suis engagé auprès de mon directeur à faire réussir ma pièce, et que j'ai compté pour cela sur votre charmante musique.'

To which Auber replied:

'Ma ronde est peu de chose, monsieur, et votre esprit peut se passer de mon faible secours. Mais si, avec la permission que vous me demandez, et dont vous n'avez nul besoin, je pouvais vous prêter la jolie voix et le joli visage de M^me^ Boulanger, je crois que nous ferions tous les deux une bonne affaire.'

fickleness of the French public, it might be furnished by this latter opera, into which Auber interpolated an air that he had previously written to Italian words. The pit rose against it. One shouted 'Paix à l'orchestre!' another, 'Cut it out!' and when the air was continued a cry suddenly arose, 'Ce n'est donc pas fini?' Anybody else would have taken the air and burned it. But Auber knew his public too well. After a time he inserted the same air in the 'Fiancée,' and it created quite a furore.

Auber uttered so many *mots spirituels*, that he was very often supposed to be the author of amusing *méchancetés* of which he was guiltless. Perhaps he acquired that reputation because, although extremely courteous—he belonged to the good old times of the last century—he occasionally launched a little criticism which cut sharply enough. Thus he said of Madame Rigault, a fair-haired, extremely correct but cold singer, 'There is a prima donna who might fire the rockets of her immense technique into a powder-mill without the slightest danger to anybody around it.' In one of the biographies of

Auber, I find that he was never among the audience at any of his performances, and had never allowed himself to be called before the footlights. In those days (I speak of 1823) the mania of calling for the actors or singers, now so ridiculously common in Paris through the *claque*, did not exist, and the luminaries of Paris in the first quarter of this century — Talma, Martin, Elleviou — were never recalled. It was only in later days that, following the Italian rage, the fashion invaded Paris, and the *claque* carried it to the most regrettable extreme ; indeed the *chefs d'emploi* contracted with the *claque* for a reception, a recall, laughter, or sobbing at given moments. I once asked the great *chef* David, who died last year, this question : 'Supposing there were two tenors or two sopranos who both pay you, but one of whom wishes to be applauded more than the other ; or say, one being recalled, the other wishes a double recall. Both being customers, what would you do ?' 'Sir,' he said, waving his hand with a majestic air, 'I am an honourable man, and I would give the preference to the one who pays best.'

There could be no doubt about the great success of 'La Neige' at the Théâtre de l'Opéra Comique. But the critics did not yet feel safe enough, and measured him his praise rather scantily. '"La Neige" est une composition agréable,' said the one. 'The inability of Monsieur Auber to create new melodies,' said the other (and note, please, that the facility with which he invented new melodies was, to the last, one of his greatest qualities), 'has led him to copy a great contemporary' (Rossini) 'and try to make himself his rival.' Auber bore it all with the greatest equanimity, but his friends grew furious at the musical critics, and one of the best judges of the present time thundered out a perfect diatribe against those people who 'wrote without any right to do so.' But when have these things been different in Paris?

The reproach that Auber tried to rival Rossini was at that time not only out of place, but it was, if I may say so, no reproach, for Rossini was at the moment simply adored by all Paris. What he wrote, what he said, what he did, were the common talk of the

whole town. Once he went to see his own 'Barbiere.' Madame Fodor sang Rosina, and Garcia—the father of the great professor who lives in London, Manuel Garcia, the master who taught Jenny Lind, Katherine Hayes, Giulietta Grisi, etc.—sang Almaviva. Rossini was hidden in a *baignoire*—a small box behind the orchestra. Madame Fodor having inserted in the singing lesson Rossini's 'Di tanti palpiti,' Garcia exclaimed, while applauding: 'Bravissima, questa musica è d'un giovinotto di gran genio' (This is the composition of a young man of great genius). So saying, he turned to the little *baignoire*. The public caught the look and made so uproarious a noise that Rossini had to get up, come to the front, and bow.

Auber did all he could to make Rossini's acquaintance, and he met him at dinner at a mutual friend, Caraffa's. There arose a question whether Lablache or Pellegrini sang the 'Figaro' better, and Rossini seated himself at the piano and sang the famous air of the ubiquitous 'Barber,' accompanying himself with such *brio*, with such *entrain* that Auber said: 'When Rossini got up I stared at the

ivory keys, it seemed to me that they must smoke!'

I have heard Rossini accompany, and I have had the honour of being accompanied by him myself. Such perfection I never heard before, and I very much fear I shall never hear again. His stout, old fingers produced on the piano a *legato* like a violin; and so marvellously did he follow the voice or the instrument which he was accompanying that he always guessed what the other performer would do, and, I am sure, you might have changed *ex improviso* every moment, and he would have followed you, however unforeseen your mood might have been. Poor Auber! when I saw him at Rossini's funeral in his grand uniform as academician, with the *plaque* of the Legion of Honour, bowed down with grief over the loss of the genius who lay in his coffin, he said: 'C'est la dernière fois que j'assiste à des funérailles EN AMATEUR!' For Auber, Rossini was the master of masters — he called him 'the Napoleon of Music.'

In 1825, Auber wrote 'Le Maçon,' the libretto of which Scribe simply purloined

from an English novel, without going through the ceremony of indicating its source. Although a certain paper said that the opera, which was translated and played all over Europe, was the feeble work of a man 'used up, totally finished,' Auber wrote after this the *chef-d'œuvre* of his life, 'La Muette de Portici,' known in England under the name of 'Masaniello.' I may here mention that the principal tenor of 'Le Maçon' was Ponchard, whose great merit—may it find many imitators in England—was a most distinct pronunciation, and all the attention it deserves given to the text. The *sujet* of the 'Maçon' was the rather romantic story of a hangman at Strasbourg, who suddenly at night hears a loud knock at his door, and finds three men armed *de cap à pie*, who command him to follow them, having first blindfolded him. They then put him in a carriage which, after long round-about ways, brings them to a house where they are led into the presence of several gentlemen, who all seem to pay great respect to one in the midst of them, a man of tall and commanding appearance. A door then opens, and a

young and handsome woman, clad in deep mourning, is introduced. The old gentleman presses her to his heart and, after a tender leave-taking, hands her over to the hangman, either to be immured alive or to have her head cut off. After which the executioner is again blindfolded and with the same precautions brought back to his house. This is lugubrious enough, yet it is the basis upon which Scribe and Auber worked their successful *opéra comique*.

Perpetually taunted for writing 'small,' which meant that he continually wrote *opéras comiques*, as if the sustained breath of an *opéra seria* was refused him, he asked Scribe whether they could not 'just try their hand' at a grand opera. Scribe said nothing, but when they discussed the possibility of finding the singers to whom they might confide their good fortune, Scribe suddenly exclaimed: 'J'ai notre affaire! There is no great singer available at the Opera. I know what to do; I have my subject.' 'What,' said Auber, 'is the title?' '"La Muette de Portici"' (The dumb maid of Portici), said Scribe. 'Since they cannot sing, let the first part be given to

a dancer, and let her mimic what she has to say. Your orchestra must provide the prima donna through a most *spirituel* and sweet accompaniment.'

The idea certainly was new and risky. It is asserted that the plan once fixed, Scribe and Germain Delavigne wrote the libretto in eight days, and handed it in December, 1827, to Auber, who wrote the score in three months. The *furore* which the opera created is well known, and it is stated by Auber's friends that of the duet, 'Amour sacré de la patrie,' which drove Paris wild for months, Rossini said: 'Je n'ai rien fait d'aussi beau.' With all due respect to Auber and to the very reliable biographer who says so, I humbly beg permission to qualify this. That Rossini may have said so to Auber, I will not contest for one moment; but that by so saying he deliberately expressed his opinion that he had never written anything so beautiful—an opinion which no musician could endorse—is what nobody will make me believe. Rossini was far from narrow-minded or jealous, and all the gossiping stories of his having been jealous of Meyerbeer, or anybody, are cer-

tainly not true. But the opinion which *au fond* he had of himself, although he took good care rather to let others praise his work than do so himself, was far too high to suffer him to speak with such sweeping abnegation. I remember how he once replied to Madame Alboni, who said to him : 'What do you want maëstro, l'humanité entière est à vos pieds.' 'If you knew,' said he, 'comme je m'en fiche de votre humanité.' Is it very likely that a man who thought himself so much above all humanity, would say of a duet, which is effective certainly, but moderately grand : 'Je n'ai jamais rien fait d'aussi beau'? . . .

Esprit and grace may be superficial qualities, but they have their undeniable weight, and they are essentially Auber's qualities. He is the very personification of the refined Frenchman, and therefore he became so popular in France. There is a duet in the 'Maçon' sung by two women who quarrel with each other, and it is impossible to find wittier music, or music which could more exactly express the meaning of the words.

On the 29th of February, 1828, the first

performance of 'La Muette' took place. Everybody knows that it treats of an Italian revolution. Louis Philippe, after the July days of 1830, told Auber that his music had encouraged the Revolution. The compliment was a trifle far-fetched, seeing that, if true, it took two years to set fire to the mine. But the humour of the story lies in this: The King seemed to be all gratitude to Auber, for had not that Revolution put him upon the throne of France? He asked Auber what favour he could do him in exchange. When Diogenes asked Alexander as the only favour he required to move out of the sunshine, the courtiers seemed frightened lest Alexander would be offended; but the hero answered, 'If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes.' With King Louis Philippe it was very nearly the same. He offered all he could do, and Auber very simply answered that he wanted 'nothing.' And what was it that the King, who so much congratulated Auber upon his opera, then asked him to do? Not to allow the 'Muette' to be played again! 'Pas trop souvent,' he said; and the fact is that it all but disappeared from the

répertoire, simply because the royal admirer of the score was afraid of the effect which the revolutionary movement on the stage would have on the audience: and this time against him, as it had been previously in his favour.

I will here mention a grand *deus ex machinâ* which Scribe made of a guitar put into the opera 'Fiorella,' which Auber composed just before 'Masaniello.' A young girl deceived by a rich lover, who went through a mock marriage with her, suddenly finds herself abandoned, and goes into a convent. Whom should she find before the door of the convent but the *troubadour* Rodolphe, who had always loved her, and whom she had always loved, although just a little distraction had made her marry the other man. Love is blind, you know, and such mistakes are but too natural. Rodolphe at first does not see it exactly in that light, and will not receive her into his heart of hearts. But she pleads, and sobs, and loves him so sincerely, now that the other man is gone, that he forgives her, and they leave the convent, bound, I suppose, on a pedestrian expedition. As she is very scantily clad in rags and it is very cold,

Rodolphe, in order to warm her, smashes his guitar to pieces, and burns it there and then—what with is not stated, but I imagine it is with the flame of his fiery passion. Let nobody now say that a guitar is good for nothing. After this proof of his love *malgré lui* they are happy, so long as the little wood flickers. After which, there being no more wood or coal to be had, they go to church to be married; whether by special license, and with what wedding dress, I know not.

'Masaniello' with a dumb prima donna, a dancer, not a singer, was attacked with vehemence, like everything that is new. The fact is that there was no reason why she should be dumb. If after the atrocious deed of Prince Alphonse she should have appeared unable to explain the wrong done to her because she was dumb, and thus have become the victim of her unfortunate infirmity, there would be a tragic effect in her unmerited fate. But the only reason why Scribe chose this novel method was, that at the Grand Opera there happened to be no great soprano, and Mdlle. Bigottini, the Fanny Elssler of the First Empire, had chanced to give a

charity performance in which she reappeared after her retirement, and gained enormous success; so Scribe jumped at the idea of appropriating this popular artiste for his piece, to secure its triumph. The very mimic talent of this great dancer, which enabled her so thoroughly to explain by eloquent gestures what had happened, that her being dumb did her no real harm, showed the anomaly of confiding a first *rôle* in an opera to a *ballerina.* Of Nourrit, who appeared in the opera as Masaniello, a contemporary said: 'It is not his voice, it is his soul whose singing one admires.' He seems, however, to have sung with so much soul that his voice gave way, and when he found he could no longer give expression to his poetical feelings, having lost the organ indispensable for such interpretation, he committed suicide.

With the kind feeling of *camaraderie*, which is habitual among tenors, Duprez, who then reigned supreme at the Opera, said that Nourrit had killed himself on hearing of his (Duprez's) success; but Nourrit's voice had been some time losing power, and at last he himself became aware of it, although usually

the artist concerned is the last to know. I shall never forget the scene I witnessed at the Paris Opera, when Roger, who sang his last Opéra performances, suddenly made a *couac*, and some people laughed. At first he stopped dumbfoundered, then suddenly he tore down his crown, and rushed to the other end of the stage, sobbing so loudly that the public shouted to him : 'Calmez-vous ; parlez, ne chantez pas.' But he felt it was all over, and he never appeared again at the Grand Opera. He would perhaps never have appeared again before the public had he not had the misfortune to shoot off his own arm. He was then persuaded to reappear at the Opéra Comique, where he had made his début, and where, he was assured, the fine remains of his voice would suffice. Whether that was so or not, he nightly filled the house, not with his fame, nor with his singing, but with his arm ! A mechanician had contrived to make him a mechanical arm, the fingers of which were small tweezers, with which he could hold a letter or any other small object. Across his back, under his coat, he had a thick elastic string attached to the artificial

arm with one end, and to the sound arm with the other end. By drawing his shoulder up, the elastic bent the elbow of the artificial arm, so that the imaginary fingers could receive what was needed and hold it fast. This toy attracted the attention of the audience, and became the town talk, and to it this incomparable artist owed his latest successes.

Opinions on the undoubted and indisputable effect of that Masaniello were very different, as it so often happens. But let nobody cast a stone at the critics who do not agree; it is not only critics who differ. Only a few days ago I met with a good instance of the saying, When doctors disagree, etc.! At a large dinner-party, there were two medical authorities of the highest rank. The question was the cholera. One of the two physicians had studied what is called the Asiatic cholera in India, had acquired great experience, and in a most eloquent and, what seemed to me, most convincing manner proved the microbe theory, the fearfully infectious character of the disease; quoting a number of cases from his personal experience, and seeming to be so convinced that he convinced all the rest of

us. Barely had he finished, when the other physician, just returned from Egypt, where he had studied the epidemic *sur place*, denied all his predecessor had said, maintained that the disease travelled along the rivers, and never changed its course, and gave instances *tant et plus*, that absolutely proved his case. In despair at not being able to make up my mind between two such authorities, I asked Dr. W., who happened to sit near me, what was his opinion, and which of the two great men was to be believed. 'Upon my word,' he said, 'I believe they are both right.' Tableau!

One more word about that 'Muette.' The grand *motif* which so brilliantly shines through the overture, and appears again in the opera at the end of the fourth act as a march—do you know how Auber hit upon it? When, with his face covered with lather, he was about to begin shaving, the melody struck him, and just as Rossini wrote the prayer of Moses with a lotion before him, into which by mistake he dipped his pen, and involuntarily produced that famous natural, the real key to the grand effect in

G major, so Auber, with the razor in one hand and the pencil in the other, rushed to his desk, and, covered with artificial snow, he noted down a theme which made the tour of Europe, bearing upon its wings the fame of inspired Auber.

Paris is to a certain extent perhaps, if not the most amusing, yet the gayest city in the world. The importance which amusement has in that city, and the anxious desire of everybody 'to be at a première,' produced in 'Gustave, ou le Bal masqué,' the same event which forty years later occurred in 'l'Africaine.' The 'bal' was so splendidly put on the stage, that a number of grandes dames, real ladies of high society, stole their way to the stage-door, bribed the Cerberus whose duty it was to forbid entry to anybody not belonging to the theatre, but who resembled his prototype so far as to take the bait when offered, and threw themselves with fury into the bacchanalian dance, enjoying it all the more that they knew they were doing wrong. At the rehearsals of the 'Africaine' I saw myself princes, dukes, and other gentlemen coming on the stage as supers, carrying hal-

berds or other paraphernalia, simply to be admitted to hear the music about which a mad excitement prevailed so long as it was new. Here let me say a word in favour of Madame Cinti-Damoreau, one of the admired Auber-singers, of whom a great critic said that she never tried to inflate her voice to give herself an appearance of greater strength than she possessed, or of an exaggerated passion. She sang on three great stages, but never has anybody heard her shout or force her voice. How I wish all our tenors and young soprani would take her example to heart!

Auber was perpetually 'at it.' Sometimes I met him on the boulevards, sometimes in his own street, Rue St. Georges, where he once amused me immensely, passing his door five times, and continually retracing his steps, and never knowing that he was before his house, because he—composed. He often went to sleep while he scored, and once I saw on his music paper a zigzag which looked like the sign which medical men make for an ounce (ʒ). I looked long at it, to find out, without asking him, what it might

signify. At last he smiled and said: 'Vous étudiez mes hiéroglyphes. Eh bien, celle-là je vous la donne en mille.' Of course I could not guess it, and he said that while writing, a rather drowsy feeling overcame him, he dozed, and the pen, following his retiring movement, 'described' the sketch mentioned.

Auber was sometimes surprised at the grandeur of his fame. He was modesty itself, and it is rather amusing to compare him to another composer, a contemporary of his, Spontini, who at a dress rehearsal of one of his operas (I believe it was 'Olympia') appeared at the desk in grand costume, covered with all the decorations he was favoured with. Approaching his desk slowly and majestically, he elevated the bâton, fixed his eagle eyes on the full orchestra and chorus, and spoke as follows: 'Gentlemen, the work which we are going to have the honour of performing is a masterpiece. Now then!'

Auber seemed to be always providing for a rainy day. He perpetually noted down *motivos*. Then, when he had an opera to

write, he took his sketch-books and there chose among the thousands of notes what he wanted. He used to say that the difficulty for him was not to get millions, but to know how to spend them or use them properly. So long as there is a question of musical notes, that may be so; but if there should be a question of bank-notes, the case always seems to me to be the reverse—it is a much greater difficulty to accumulate millions than to spend them.

It is known that with so many operas pouring from his ever-ready pen, he occupied a great number of singers, and he had always something soothing to say even when he was not particularly pleased; for instance, of Ricquier, who used to sing with a downright false intonation, he said: 'Ricquier sings between the keys of the piano.' Berlioz did not use such kid-gloves when he had some fault to find with a singer. He wrote about Duprez, whose perpetual *éclats de voix* broke at last even his steel organ, although he had for thirteen years tyrannized over the Opera without anybody daring to say what everybody was

well aware of: 'Duprez shouts so that he hurts the chest of the audience.'

'Fra Diavolo,' 'Le Domino Noir,' 'Les Diamants de la Couronne' (of which one critic said they were the last diamonds in Auber's crown), and many other successful operas, were translated into every civilized language and sung all over Europe. Fertility is not always a proof of greatness, because quantity is not necessarily quality, but it is undoubtedly more difficult to write a number of great works than a few, just as a horse may well run one mile in two minutes, and yet not succeed in running five miles in twenty.

In the year 1844, Auber had great success with an opera called 'Le Duc d'Olonnes.' Appointed *Directeur des concerts de la cour*, he had to accompany those who by royal favour were received at the Tuileries to sing or play before their majesties. It so happened that a young man arriving from Toulouse in the same year, and well recommended, was 'commanded' to play at the palace, and Auber therefore had to accompany him. The name of the young violinist was Prosper Sainton, who has since been heard

of in this good city of London. Anxious as every young artist is to make a name, and fancying that the day after he played at Court every newspaper in Europe would be filled with all the details of his performance—an illusion which so many of us have entertained—he called on Auber to ask for an appointment in order to rehearse his piece. 'Come at six o'clock,' said Auber. 'In the evening?' asked Sainton. 'Not so,' replied Auber, 'at six in the morning.' And at six in the morning young Sainton repaired to the house of the celebrated composer, who was already studiously working at his piano, and informed Sainton, who was surprised to see him up so early, 'Ah mais j'y suis depuis *cinq* heures.' They went through the piece, Auber asking to be allowed to make some changes in the *ritournelles;* and in the evening they went to the palace, where they were received as if Auber had been King, and Louis Philippe the great musician. Queen Amélie sat there with her *broderie* in her hand; all the other ladies had some work to do. There was none of the etiquette of a royal family, but the kindness and simplicity

of *bons bourgeois*. Auber sat down to the piano and accompanied the pupil to whom he had a very short time before, as President of the Jury, awarded the *premier prix*, after which they all took tea together, making both Auber and Sainton forget that they sat with the royal family. When they went away, Auber conducted Sainton to his house, and cut short his effusions of gratitude by saying, 'But don't you see that it is only because I am older than you, that I can render you some service; when you reach my age you will do the same for your young friends;' and he left the young man dreaming of all he had achieved that evening, and mightily surprised next morning that there should be another subject of conversation all over Paris than the Court concert where he had played. What an importance everything that concerns us has in our own eyes, and what long experience we need to perceive that we are but a drop in that ocean called the world! I say 'we,' because you and I, and I dare say everybody, more or less, has been in the same position and fancied what we have done was a matter of vast im-

portance, which a few years later resembles a bubble that has burst.

When we remember that Auber wrote 'Marco Spada' in 1852, that is to say, when he was seventy years old, the indestructible *verve* of this great man must strike everybody. This 'Marco Spada' followed an opera less known, but which in its time created some sensation — 'La Corbeille d'oranges.' I mention it only on account of one of the greatest singers of this century, who bowed then for the first time to a Parisian operatic audience—Marietta Alboni.

Everybody has heard the story of Mozart writing the overture to 'Don Juan' at the very last moment, and rehearsing it whilst the ink was not dry with which it was copied out. When Auber wrote 'La Sirène,' he rehearsed everything except the overture, which he left for the dress rehearsal the night before the performance. It was played, and displeased not only the performers, but, more than anyone, Auber himself. It was nine o'clock in the evening. He said, 'Go on rehearsing; I have something to do, but I will be back as soon as I can.' At midnight he

returned, and brought the full MS. of a new overture. He gave it at once to the copyist, and said to him, 'It would be fine fun if this should be worse than the other one.' 'That is impossible,' said the copyist, who meant to be very courteous. The next evening the parts were all written out on the desks, and the overture was uproariously encored. I have stated that Auber would never attend a performance of any of his operas. 'If I did,' he said, 'I could never write another note.' The delight he took in Rossini's music made him one evening go to hear 'William Tell,' and he sat quietly waiting for the charming violoncello trio, which begins the overture. The conductor arrived and gave the sign. Oh, horror! Instead of the low E on the 'cello, a smashing diminished seventh. . . . Through a prima donna's indisposition 'William Tell' could not be given, and unknown to Auber the *spectacle* had been changed, and his 'Masaniello' was put in the place of 'Tell.' So he jumped up as quickly as his green eighty-seven years would allow, and ran away from his own work.

A French critic who said that he never

criticized music because he understood it, and left that business to those who did not (they are numerous in France), called Auber 'Cet adorable jeune homme de 87 ans.' But that 'amiable young man of 87' was for ever having the weakness to write his last opera. Every score he sent to the Opéra Comique was the last one. He was just like those gamblers who always say, 'If I win this time, I withdraw,' and that goes on until they have to stop because they have lost all and have nothing more to play with. A very great pianist, one of the greatest known, once sat at the 'green table' at Baden Baden, and won thousand after thousand francs. I came in when he had won 6,000 francs, and I begged of him to stop and take his 'mammon.' He would not. He said he must have 10,000 francs. Well, he went on; he won again—so he had 7,000, but he continued, lost, doubled, lost, and at last he lost everything he could lose, and then he swore he would not play again. A year afterwards in America I saw him at it furiously, and again and again losing. If you are possessed of a mania, be it a passion or a vice, do all you

can to master it in the beginning, or you will infallibly become its slave.

Auber was, more than any known composer, the friend of the unknown singer. It was a point with him to 'invent' a singer. Any sympathetic young girl with a fresh voice, any young man who boldly asserted his talent and had a nice appearance, could be sure to get some *rôle* from Auber. Once launched in that world of variety called the stage, he was forgotten for some new discovery. Auber had a longer life than many men, not only because he lived more years, but because he lived more hours every day. He rarely slept four hours, and he once told me that he nearly did without sleep after his twentieth year. 'When the sun rose and threw his brilliant rays into my room, I knew it was time to extinguish my lamp and go to bed.' Like so many Parisians the atmosphere of the boulevards was the only one he thought fit to breathe. I well remember a lady who asked me where I had been travelling in August, and after I had told her, she exclaimed, 'Ah! il n'y a qu'à Paris qu'on peut vivre!' It happened once to

Auber that his doctor told him he must go away for a fortnight. He left for the country, remained there five days working from morning till evening in his room, and then he rushed back to Paris, and during the whole time of his return journey thought of nothing but the score which was to follow the one he had just finished.

He had a way of defending people for which they were not always grateful. It is well known what a scandal the first performance of Wagner's 'Tannhaüser' caused, the Jockey Club being determined to hiss the opera to death. Several musicians discussed the music before Auber, who at last said, 'It would be childish to deny Wagner's great talent. The misery is that his music is written like a book without a stop or a comma; you don't know where to take breath, and you are suffocated even when you feel inclined to admire.' Wagner himself called it endless melody, but as we are all mortal and must grow towards an end, we cannot easily conceive the endless in any sense.

Auber prized his servants and his horses.

He had two servants with him for forty years, and I am not sure but that his despair when his horses were taken during the siege to be slaughtered and eaten, cut his life short. He would never admit that he was old. Some one showed him a white hair on his coat-collar. 'Oh,' he said, 'some old man must have passed near me.' 'Don't you think,' a lady asked him once, 'that it is very unpleasant to grow old?' 'Very,' he said, 'but until now it has always been thought the only means to live long.'

Auber's last opera, strange to say, was 'Le *premier* jour de Bonheur.' He wrote it for Madame Cabel, one of the three renowned vocalists of Paris who had been music-hall singers; that is, Cabel, Ugalde, and Marie Sass, who had one of the most superb voices ever heard at the grand Opéra. A young singer, with a transparent pink and white complexion, made her début in that opera —Marie Roze. She has developed her talent and the width of her shoulders since then. On February 15th, 1868, the 'young' octogenarian produced this last opera at the Théâtre de l'Opéra Comique, which had

seen so many of his successes. As usual, he would not stay in the house to hear it ; but during the last act he came on the stage, and every one of the performers was sure, when the opera was over, he had but just seen him, and they made up their minds that, when public clamour called him before the curtain, they would this time compel him to come forward. But, as if by magic, he had disappeared : they sought him everywhere, but found no Auber. When at last there was no chance of bringing him before the footlights, and the public began to leave the house, Monsieur Auber knocked at the door of Madame Cabel, who had played the chief part in the opera, and of Mdlle. Marie Roze, who, though entrusted with a much smaller part, had really made the hit of the evening, with the 'Romance des Djinn,' and apologizing for his disappearance invited them both, and in fact all the principals, to a supper at the Café Anglais.

Auber, although well advanced in years, never felt tired: he did, as I said, almost without sleep, and at that supper it was he who enlivened the young singers by his verve and his funny stories.

But they began to feel a reaction after the excitement of the première, and Auber saw that he could not keep them much longer; so he called the garçon to pay his addition, which was quickly brought. But oh, horror! what did he find? He had no money. He told the garçon, 'I am Monsieur Auber: I will pay to-morrow.' 'You may be Monsieur Auber,' said the garçon, 'but you must pay to-night.' A short conversation arose; the master of the establishment was not to be found: what was to be done? 'I cannot help it,' said Auber, 'I must send to my notaire. He always has gold in his safe. It is a cruel thing to awake the poor man, who has been asleep probably for several hours; but what can I do?' Of course all the singers offered their purses at once, so as to avoid inconvenience, but he would not be persuaded. He sent a few words, pencilled, by a cabman, with orders to insist on seeing the old gentleman, who, poor victim, half an hour later made his appearance in terror, and amazed as a point of interrogation. What could old Monsieur Auber have done—what scrape could he have got into—that at two o'clock

in the morning he wanted his notary to help him out? You may imagine how surprised he was when he heard that it was nothing but a few hundred francs Auber wanted to pay for his supper. But barely had he appeased the anxious waiter, when Auber struck his forehead with his open hand and said: 'Ah, que je suis bête, I have my purse in my overcoat, now I think of it; I'll pay you back at once. And there is a sovereign for you,' he said to the waiter. 'T'as bien joué ton rôle!' Well, what was the explanation? He had the money in his pocket, and had played this farce with the waiter in order to keep the company an hour longer together!

Auber died during the siege, broken-hearted at being forced out of his habits, separated from his horses and his quiet way of life. He was as thorough a Frenchman as ever lived. Full of ready wit, fidgety to the last degree even in his work, changing so much, that 'some one else or something else' possessed the latest and greatest attraction for him; a gifted organization, a most amiable man, and the most fertile and successful composer of his time. Yet such is the ease with which

Frenchmen forget, even their gloires nationales, that if anyone should propose a marble statue for Auber ten years hence, in addition to the little monument they erected for him in his ville natale, at Caen, he would perhaps not get the amount necessary for the plaster-cast! Sic transit gloria mundi.

BERLIOZ.

ONE of the giants of this century, an innovator in music, a great journalist, a literary man of much importance, a teacher of humanity, a genius undoubtedly, and the victim, as it so frequently happens, of his own originality, was Hector Berlioz, born the 11th of December, 1803, in France, at the Côte St. André, near Lyons and Grenoble.

Beethoven is considered the creator of our instrumental music, further developed by Meyerbeer, Liszt, and Wagner. Beethoven certainly was the first man who, building upon the sweet traditions of Haydn and Mozart a system of concerted sonority unknown to them, left the path of the nightingale to soar on the powerful wings of the eagle. What Beethoven created was seized upon by Berlioz and

developed to a degree which no one before him dreamed of, no one after him surpassed. His 'Messe des Morts,' a requiem written for five orchestras, and for a chorus of two hundred and ten voices, shows the deepest knowledge, and the most extraordinary comprehension of orchestral and vocal sonority which an unbounded imagination, and an undoubted though eccentric genius, are able to bestow.

What is genius? And whence does it come? Those are two questions not so easily answered as the two questions which the German poet Halm so satisfactorily answered, viz.: 1. What is love?—Two souls but one thought, two hearts and one beat. 2. And how comes love?—It comes, and there it is. Genius is the power to create new and admirable work. Be it admirable from its grandeur, like Michel Angelo's, Shakespeare's, Beethoven's, or from its graceful loveliness, like Raphael d'Urbino's, Heine's, Mozart's, it must be new, original, charming, or grand, powerful, crushing. 'Poeta nascitur, non fit,' is perfectly correct. Whether genius comes from divine inspiration, or, as the profane matter-of-fact people would

have it, from an accidental lucky formation of the cells of the brain, one thing is certain in either case, man has no control over his genius : work and study can further it, but cannot give it ; and since you are subject to the inspiration but cannot command it, it is perfectly unfair to demand that a genius, one eager to calculate and execute unheard-of effects, should be calm, and put two and two together like a linendraper, who lays the yard on his material and cuts at the precise point where the measure ends, there to begin again and ever again the same mechanical work. You cannot exact, and should not expect, from an overheated brain attention to details which a cool and unoccupied brain might easily reckon with ; and when Gustave Doré once went to an evening party in his studio coat, with a number of not very picturesque colour-spots on the lapel, it was not because he meant to pose, but because in his brain more powerful conceptions struggled and engaged his thought than in the brains of a number of empty-headed young men, who all day long give the most persevering consideration to the colour of their neckties and the mathematically

precise measure of their buttonholes, and who would have taken good care before going to a party repeatedly and considerately to look at the beloved features in the glass before trusting so important a master-work to the admiring gaze of common eyes.

This it is which makes it so unfair to speak of a real genius with an easy carelessness—'Oh! he is mad!'—or, what is tantamount, 'He is an inventor,' etc. If his brain was so empty that he had to think of nothing else than his tailor's combinations, he would probably be more conformable to masher-fashion and would less serve humanity. But then, from the Parthenon to Faust, there would be less trace of genius and more of the bend of the brim of hats, or the vastly important question whether boots ought to be pointed or rounded at the toe.

What is called vocation never received a more striking illustration than in Berlioz. Just as Ovid, beaten for perpetually making verses, cried for pardon—in verse, so all the privation which Berlioz's family imposed upon him, in order to win back his soul from perdition, *i.e.* from writing music, only made him

cling with more pertinacity to the aim which he had proposed to himself. I knew him long in his olden days, and can bear witness to many things not mentioned in his 'Memoirs,' though we must, before all, look to this autobiography as the reliable guide for his first studies and struggles. With his irrepressible wit and esprit, often exercised at his own cost when there was no other target near, he states that his mother felt no illusion about bringing into the world a laurel leaf, as the mother of Virgil did, nor did she feel like Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, a sensation like a burning ember in her interior. He says: 'However extraordinary it may appear, I came into the world without any more ado than a common mortal!' Educated most strictly in the Catholic religion, he was for seven years a child of deep belief and religion; and although 'brouillés ensemble,' ever from that time, he remembers 'tenderly' the first impressions received from its teachings, which proves two things: 1, that it is not true that our first impressions influence all our life; and 2, that you cannot develop a carnation from a rosebud, whatever you may

do, or, in plain English of the old Latin verse, 'Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret,'—you cannot go against Nature. So long as he was a *saint*, that is until his seventh year, he went to hear mass daily and to confess every Sunday, and he said to his father confessor: 'Mon père, je n'ai rien fait;' to which invariably the holy man replied: 'C'est bien, mon enfant, il faut continuer.'

Berlioz's father was a doctor. He did nothing to save his son from the exalted bigotry of his mother. His was a peaceful view of life, and he was a man for simple solutions of problems. Berlioz, although recognising with gratitude the solicitude of his father's devotion to him, greatly preferred the English system of education, where the boy is sent out to school and learns how to stand on his own legs and defend himself against the attacks of other boys, thus beginning early the struggle of life. It is one of the chief rules of education in England to let a child learn the consequences of his doings. I remember once having seen at Brighton a gentleman lying on the beach, and his

son playing with a little shovel just where the waves came in slowly, but steadily. The father never lost sight of the child, yet never said what every French father would have considered it his duty to cry out: 'Be careful, Sonny; the water is coming, you will have your boots wet,' etc. The boy saw the water very well; let him have a little experience. And it was not long coming. A big wave suddenly revolving dashed on the sand and reached the little adventurer's feet, wetting his boots and stockings. He said nothing, he looked at his father, who seemed to have perceived nothing; but he pitched his little camp some yards farther back, and paid considerable attention to the succeeding movements of the water. Experience taught him, where constant warning would only have bored him.

Berlioz's first love—he was then thirteen years of age — was a young lady named Estelle, who made a great impression on him, because she wore pink boots, an embellishment which he had never contemplated before. Though rather precociously enamoured, he was in this respect beaten by Mozart, who

when seven years old played at the Austrian Court, and there and then proposed to Princess Marie Antoinette, who did not lose her heart with the enfant prodige, but who lost her head with her royal marriage, poor princess! Berlioz, original in his musical ideas, was equally original in his views. Thus he says: 'Time goes for nothing in love.' A second love by no means effaces the first, and his heart beat after thirty years when he returned home, and saw the place where he first admired the pink brodequins, and that in spite of his having learned that she got married and—what usually follows that ceremony (ce qui s'en suit).

He learned to read, and what is more difficult, to understand how to compose music when twelve years of age. He had then already produced two quintets. Those biographers, who stated that even at twenty he knew not what music was, have been slightly mistaken. He relates with some complacency that he was passé-maître of three instruments at that time. Musicians, who know the immense effects of sonority which I have alluded to, will learn with surprise that the three instru-

ments he had mastered before all, were the guitar, the flute, and the piccolo—not very mighty exponents of orchestral power. As to the piano, he never understood it, a remarkable instance, and I believe a very exceptional one with a composer, and especially with one who became the master of masters concerning the intrinsic knowledge of the mechanism of every instrument.

He even declared in later years that he was glad he did not know it, although it might have been 'en maintes circonstances' useful to him. This is a curious argument, which reminds one of the French girl who said, 'I hate asparagus, and I am very glad I do, because if I did like it I should eat it, and I can't bear it.' On the 10th of April, 1848, the very day when in a letter from London he described the struggle he had had with his father, who compelled him to study medicine against his inclination, he suddenly stops, and for three months writes barely another word. On that day in April, as everybody knows, the great Chartist demonstration came in fact to nothing, and he wrote at eight o'clock in the evening, after having

expected in the morning to see barricades, street-fights à la mode de France: 'Good Chartists, you understand organising riots as the Italians understand how to write symphonies. O'Connell was quite right when he told his people: "Conspire, but do not move!"' Understanding how to organize riots Berlioz evidently considered killing each other in the street, because whether the black coat killed the red one, or the reverse, one Englishman would have killed another. Yet with the same mocking pen he writes on July 10th of the same year: 'I am back in France. Paris has just done burying the dead. What a sight, what horrible scenes! Even the Genius of Liberty on the top of the Bastille-column had his heart pierced by a ball. What furious follies, what bloody orgies! Historical painters troop the streets, our great architects mix plaster in the national ateliers. In the midst of this frightful confusion of just and unjust, true and false, good and evil, one really might become completely mad!'

Very well! Yet three months before in London all this seemed to look very desirable.

It is a curious fact that his first forced visit to the 'amphitheatre,' where dissection was taught, terrified him to such an extent that his excitable nerves, horribly impressed by the sight and the smell of blood, and details which I do not wish to describe in these columns, caused him to jump out of the window—fortunately from a ground-floor—and rush home, locking himself in his room to have no more of it. Yet when a friend, surgical and musical like himself, persuaded him to get over this first and always horrible impression, he returned to the dissecting-room and calmly began his studies, even from time to time throwing a piece of human flesh to the rats which abound in Paris, and who served during the siege to feed those who could afford even that luxury.

It has often been stated that composers who have wasted their ideas, who have no more inspiration, who can find no new melodies, take refuge in the oratorio, the mass—in one word, in the sacred style, because there formulas will do, as melodic ideas in this kind of music are not of so much consequence. This is deplorable but true. Just as a woman, very

gay in her youth, when she was sure of being surrounded by scores of admirers, turns pious, often even a nun in Catholic countries, when she grows old, so a number of operatic composers — Rossini, Verdi, Gounod, and numbers of others, began writing sacred music in their old age. This has a double disadvantage, because the old Italian masters considered—and rightly so—the composition of sacred works the highest achievement. They wrote models of counterpoint, which it takes a lifetime thoroughly to master, whereas our modern composers, having their eye chiefly on money-making, that is, on pleasing the masses, wisely neglect a more thoroughgoing study of counterpoint, thus ignoring the study principally necessary for writing a great ecclesiastical work; and being, moreover, barren of ideas—the very reason why they take to this kind of work—they get through it in the most unmeaning, empty manner, relying entirely on what are called Rosalias, viz., ever-repeated forms, used as paper-hangers use a pattern cut out of board, say leaves or flowers, over which they go quickly with a big brush, repeating the process until a whole piece of

so many yards is done. It is, in fact, artisan's, not artist's work.

Not so Berlioz. He wrote his 'Messe des Morts,' a colossal work, when a young man, and if an eccentric work be measured by the unlimited eccentricity of proportions, surely the list only of his requirements for this work is one of the astounding curiosities of orchestral-score writing of this, and, in fact, of any century. For in the 'Dies iræ,' the part which calls up the dead from the grave, the Tuba mirum, is marked in the score in the following manner: 'A chorus of 210 voices in six parts.' This, by-the-bye, is not exactly correct, because six parts means six real parts, which cannot properly be said of three times two parts in unison. Besides the immense orchestra, which there is no need to detail here, with eight pairs of drums and ten drummers, ten pairs of cymbals, four gongs and two double drums, there are four orchestras in the four corners of about forty brass instruments, so distributed as to simulate the call of the dead from the four corners of the world. Both at the first, and a very recent performance, the effect in Paris was amazing, and

wherever it can be given as demanded by the composer, there can be no doubt about the result.

Berlioz wrote his first opera when twenty years old. He set it to a libretto, which he calls ridiculous, adding with great candour: 'My score was at least as ridiculous, if not more so, than the verses and the libretto of "Gerono."' Of course it was never performed. No more than a mass which he wrote immediately afterwards, when he began already to find out that the great key of success for beginners is to have money, or to be patronized by those who have it. He wanted fifty pounds to execute the mass. Fearless as only a boy can be, he wrote to that great man Chateaubriand to lend it him. With the wonderful poetic simplicity that distinguishes the celebrated author of 'Atala' he replied: 'Vous me demandez douze cents francs, Monsieur. Je ne les ai pas. Je vous les enverrais si je les avais,' etc. After telling him, 'You ask fifty pounds; I have not got it,' he gives him this valuable piece of advice: 'Much as I sympathize with your sufferings, let me tell you that it is just

the obstacles which talent has often to overcome, which win it the power of ultimate success.' A friend, Monsieur De Pons, lent Berlioz the money, however, and here we come to an episode in his life which is difficult to understand. Full of gratitude for the service, and not forgetting it when he was a great man and a courted journalist, he says: 'I sometimes found an opportunity to be useful to him in my *feuilleton*, but I always regretted not to be able to do more for him,' etc. Query: Has a journalist, from whom the public expect true and impartial judgment, the right to recommend a friend in payment of private services rendered to him; or is he in honour bound to render service for service under the circumstances? I believe that, strictly speaking, he has no more right to pay his debts of friendship with the opinion in his paper, than he could pay them with the money confided to him by the editor for other purposes. Yet it seems difficult to imitate the judgment pronounced by Brutus against his own son, sacrificing to the conscience of the magistrate the heart of the father! It only shows that sometimes two

duties come in conflict with each other, and that it is very difficult to choose what is the more important and which is to be sacrificed.

When this mass, thanks to the loan from De Pons, was executed a second time (1827), Berlioz picked up his courage and conducted it himself. He in later days the greatest conductor known—not 'although' but 'because' his nerves were in such an over-excited state that he nearly heard the impossible—speaks of himself thus on this occasion: 'How far was I from possessing the thousand qualities of precision, flexibility, fire and calm, combined with that indefinable instinct which together constitute the talent of the real conductor!'

So many people fancy, and many unfortunately have given way to their fancy, that a conductor need only take up a stick and beat time! Certainly in very easy instances, this may be sufficient; but in such cases without any conducting at all the band would go on, as the German street bands go on without any conductor. Thus I have seen Madame Trebelli conduct a chorus in St.

James's Hall, and certainly this amiable artist stands too high in her profession to try and aspire to what is not her business. So the Viscountess Folkestone certainly accomplished a more difficult task in training a number of young ladies, and forming a stringed orchestra, which under her able guidance perform not very difficult, but very pleasing pieces with a wonderful dash. I do not think that one member of the whole orchestra is as old as twenty-five years—and a remarkable *ensemble* they form. But if it came to playing great and difficult scores, the reading of which is in itself a great difficulty, the judging of the right movement, the entry of instruments that have sometimes fifty, sixty bars to count, when the look of the conductor's eye must guide them at the precise moment of entry—when it comes to making the orchestra understand and execute the sometimes not quite clear intentions of the composer, then it is that the great conductor shows the stuff he is made of. I remember having seen Berlioz—and this is what I meant when alluding to his over-excited nerves—jumping down from the conductor's desk, pouncing upon the clarinets

and exclaiming: 'Your two instruments are not in tune.' Then each of them gave his A, when with unfailing certainty not only did he perceive an infinitesimal difference, but instantly told them, there and then, how to remedy it. It chanced in our days to one of the greatest conductors living, Hans Richter, that the orchestra, when he first led it, meant to play him some pranks, for, be it known, that is just what orchestras in general are inclined to do. The moment a new conductor comes before them, they try any sort of trick to see how he will get out of it. The first thing that happened was that the hornist played a passage badly, and when Richter remonstrated, he very obligingly said: 'Perhaps you would not mind showing me how I am to do it?' 'With pleasure,' said Richter, taking the horn out of his hands, and he showed him. After he had done so to several other instrumentalists, they were satisfied as to what they wanted to know, and now it is sufficient for him to lift up his hand, and they understand, and instantly endeavour to carry out his instructions.

Berlioz's first interview with Cherubini, the most tyrannical though perhaps the most musical director the Paris Conservatoire ever had, is too funny to be omitted. Cherubini, afraid that so many young men meeting so many young girls might lead to duets other than those he composed, issued an order that all the female pupils were to enter from the Rue Bergère, and all the male students from the Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière. Should any of them have arrived at the wrong street there was no excuse allowed: they had to go back so as to come in from the other side. Ignoring this new law, Berlioz entered through the door Bergère, and when nearly at the stairs of the library, the porter ran after him to make him come back and go out of the door which he had entered, and walk round the whole building to enter the other door. Berlioz sent him to Halifax, and went up to the library. Barely seated there, he saw the porter arriving in company with the inexorable Draco, the Director, who pounced upon him for a satisfactory explanation of his daring to evade the law, failing which he would not be allowed to come there at all. Whatever Berlioz

replied being of no avail, he at last lost patience and told Cherubini he would and could not be forbidden to enter a public library, and he would return as often as he liked. Thereupon the enraged Italian tried to seize him and get him arrested. But Berlioz, younger and more lightfooted than either the autocrat or the porter, ran before them both, to the amazement of the assembled students in the library, Cherubini and the porter stumbling over chairs and music-desks, until Berlioz laughingly opened the door, and rushed out, saying: 'You shall not have either me or my name, and in spite of you I shall return here.' And he kept his word, for twelve years later he was 'Librarian' of the Conservatoire, and the very porter (Hottin) his most devoted servant.

An indomitable will, that first necessity where anything great is to be achieved, exhibited itself in full force when his father, strictly forbidding him to continue his musical 'illusions' at the expense of his medical studies, withdrew the small sum allowed for his subsistence, in order to force him to give up what he not only thought an unremune-

rative, useless pursuit, but what his pious mother, from fear of the contact in which it might bring Berlioz with the stage and with its unholy priestesses, condemned to such an extent that, when he would not give in and abandon the career which he had chosen, she actually cursed him.

Determined to go on with his music, even without allowance, and left at last to his own resources, he solicited the place of a chorister. Having to compete with three or four other poor men, he vanquished his competitors easily by reading at sight anything they laid before him, and singing from memory a whole scene he had heard at the opera. Of course the weaver and the blacksmith, who were his rivals, were beaten, and he received the official nomination to the post, which brought him two pounds a month! On this splendid appointment he associated himself with another student who had about as much; they spent twenty-five shillings a month each; and with two pupils sent by Providence to increase his 'economies,' he began a life of luxury by buying a piano, a real piano for four pounds! I give all

these details in the hope that they may encourage a gifted but not wealthy young man to continue the struggle of life against all odds, if he feels a real vocation, and not to be daunted by unavoidable difficulties.

The great event of Berlioz's private life was his becoming acquainted with Miss Smithson and with Shakespeare, whose Ophelia she introduced to the Paris public. He says that the dramatic genius of her performance can only be compared to the revolution which Shakespeare's works produced in him. 'The lightning which with a sublime enlightenment opened for me the heaven of art, illuminated at the same time the most distant depths. In Shakespeare I recognised the real grandeur, the true beauty, the real dramatic truth.' After seeing Miss Smithson in 'Romeo and Juliet' he was 'done for' (*achevé*). But he denies that he ever exclaimed, as he was said to have done by some biographer in the *Illustrated London News*, that he would marry that woman and would write his greatest symphony on that play. 'I did it, but I never said a word about it.' The fact is, that he did it without

ever having dreamed that it would come about. Yet this very English girl whom he would have envers et malgré tout, even malgré elle-même (because neither she nor her mother were at first inclined to listen to his fiery and unpractical proposals), became so indifferent to him in later days, that he spoke of her as la femme Smithson.

Although a genius of the most impulsive spontaneity, he resembled somewhat the Prince who was a long time ambassador here, and astonished the diplomatic and aristocratic world by the munificence of his fêtes, the liberality of his character, and the truly grand style of his life, and who was a model of social elegance, but perhaps less so of matrimonial purity. He had a wife whose beauty, intelligence, and delicate taste in art were generally admired; which did not prevent the Prince from admiring occasionally other elegant ladies' taste and beauty, sometimes even ladies of a much less refined character. It so happened that once two gentlemen, waiting to be received by him, saw the Princess in her riding-habit coming out of her own room and going downstairs to

mount her truly fiery steed. She was just one of those ladies who wear that little riding-hat with peculiar grace and sit a horse with perfect ease and security. The Princess had barely passed out when the two gentlemen, full of admiration, began their observations on the eclectic tastes of the Prince and the different coups de canif which he was credited with inflicting on his marriage contract: and as they were venting their virtuous indignation (with which we are so liberal whenever others are concerned), the Prince came in.

'And what are you laughing at?' he said.

At first they would not exactly speak out; but one of them, at last, resolutely said:

'Well, I do not mind telling you: we spoke about the grace and charm of the Princess, and the gallery of comparative excellence to which you seem to have likened her.'

'Oh,' said the Prince, 'you mean that I have the reputation of not kneeling exclusively before one shrine? Is that what you mean? Well, I will tell you something that happened to me only a few years ago. I was in Austria then, and had business with the Prelate of

Korneuburg, a high ecclesiastic, who had a magnificent palace with his monastery. I had to wait for him as he was engaged in clerical business, and looking out of the window I enjoyed the magnificent view, a high mountain with a pine forest just opposite, the river below, and a charming flower-covered valley. I was quite enchanted, so much so that I did not hear the venerable Prelate coming in until he was quite near me. "What a magnificent view," I said to him, "and how happy you must be to see it at all times of the day!"

'"It *is* a magnificent view," replied the Prelate; "but, your Highness, to look forty years out of the same window renders the most beautiful sight monotonous." Please draw your inference!'

It did not take Berlioz forty years, barely forty months, to arrive at the same conclusion at which the Prince arrived. However, being at first *feu et flamme*, he reflected day and night what he could do to reach from his obscurity the brilliant actress who at that moment drove all Paris mad. To give denial to the younger Alex. Dumas' axiom: 'C'est l'amour qui nous fait concevoir les plus grandes

choses et nous empêche de les accomplir,' he hit upon a grand plan, then quite unheard of in France, namely, to organize a concert where nothing but his orchestral compositions should be executed, so as to show *her* that (using Correggio's words, 'Anch' io son pittore') he too was an artist.

He 'conceived' the idea, and he *did* 'accomplish' it.

He did all that was required, and after having himself copied all the orchestral parts, so as to save the money to be paid to the copyist, having taken incredible trouble with the rehearsals, and having had the satisfaction at the performance of being applauded by the members of the orchestra themselves, he learned after careful inquiry that Miss Smithson (the *raison d'être* of the whole concert) never heard a word about him, his talent, or his success! What a lesson for all who imagine that whatever they do is of such great importance, and who find at last that their very existence is barely known.

Often I heard him say that, when he decided to write for the papers he did so with the determination to defend the beau-

tiful in art against the Philistines, just as Schumann did. What a happy illusion! Tell that scourge of the universe, mediocrity, what it is good for, tell the nonentities that the world does not in the least care for them, tell great men that they are great, and you will have told the truth. And what will be the result? Out of a thousand men or women you will find five or six to recognise and appreciate your honest desire. The majority, the nonentities, the mediocrities, though not blamed or ridiculed, but in the mildest way possible reproved, and the very great men praised, but never so much as they think themselves entitled to, will together form a chorus against you at the first opportunity, and abuse you behind your back, while nine-tenths of them will be cowards enough, or diplomatic or 'kind' enough to find you, before your face, the 'only critic whose opinion it is worth taking.'

Just let a difference arise when these honourable people would have to stand up for you and say publicly that which they have said so many times and have written to you privately, and you will learn why after

many years writing for the *Journal des Débats* with the exceptional knowledge, the brilliant style, the *esprit* and tact of a great writer, Berlioz was so disgusted that he blessed the day when he got rid of writing *feuilletons*. Old and hackneyed as the French proverb with the bad pun in it is, it remains everlastingly true : ' La vérité se trouve au fond d'un puits ; il faut être un sceau (sot) pour l'y aller chercher.' What you gain by saying the truth is—'friends' who at the most trifling incident leave you, and enemies who at any time when opportunity offers stab you in the back.

It is a common course to attribute success to luck. That may be correct for a time, but in the long-run it is safe to be incorrect, because nobody can succeed by chance alone. Yet, how ill-luck may prevent success, or at least defer it, is well illustrated in Berlioz's life. Once he had written a symphony, which a friendly director had consented to have performed. Berlioz himself copied all the parts out, to be certain that there were no faults in it; he had even obtained the aid of a number of supernumerary musicians and choristers,

who assisted him 'honoris causa.' The rehearsal was fixed for the next day. Berlioz asked whether everything was ready for the orchestra and chorus. 'Of course,' was the reply, as if it was absurd to doubt it. Yet when he arrived, and the band and chorus were assembled, there were four desks, no seats, the instruments could not be placed, and after frantic efforts to render the performance possible, it had to be given up! Another time a concession was obtained from the director of the Grand Opera to have the same work performed there. Everything was provided, and the rehearsal was a great success; but when the evening came, such a storm broke over Paris as had not been seen for fifty years. The streets were for hours impassable, so that at the beginning of the peformance there were hardly two hundred people in the whole house. As Gérard, the lion-killer, said: 'To succeed in a dangerous enterprise you may be ever so calm, you may depend on your skill; but you must have luck as well, or you can do nothing.'

I am well aware that Berlioz himself knew the excited state of his brain, as was shown by

an exclamation of his when he tried in vain to attract the attention of Miss Smithson, and said of himself, '*Pauvre fou!*' About that time he received an interesting letter from Rouget de Lisle, whose authorship of the 'Marseillaise' was long in dispute. Berlioz had set the 'Marseillaise' for orchestra and chorus, and instead of the usual direction, 'Tenors, basses, etc., *tutti*,' in order to indicate that the whole audience should sing with them, he wrote, 'Let everybody sing that has a voice, a heart, a drop of blood in his veins.' Rouget de Lisle, wishing personally to know the author who had so magnificently orchestrated his revolutionary song, wrote to Berlioz to ask for a meeting, which, on account of Berlioz's departure, did not come off; the letter begins thus: 'Your head seems to be a volcano in perpetual eruption.' And that it really was. Poor Rouget de Lisle! How long was his authorship of the great hymn disputed! He died lonely, poor, 'un misérable ermite écloppé,' as he calls himself; and half a century passed before it was acknowledged that his was the song which inspired troops on the battle-

field, and which made a shambles of the streets of the chief city of France, the 'capital of civilization,' as the modest Parisians call it.

Strange is the persistency with which Berlioz denounces French fickleness, although he was French himself—French to the marrow of the bone, both in irresistible impulse and unstable restlessness. Once it happened that a friend of his, a famous pianist, H. (probably Hiller), spoke to a girl whom he loved, about Berlioz, and said, 'There is a man who never thinks of women; that is one whom I defy you ever to bring to your feet.' Had that speech been intentional, it could not have been more calculated to give a French girl, full of coquetry and *esprit de contradiction*, a desire to succeed, just because it was said to be impossible. Berlioz, who took not the slightest heed of the girl, not because she was his friend's, but because he was utterly indifferent to her, played unknowingly his own game. It was too much for her to remain unnoticed; so she wrote and gave him an appointment. He received the letter, but forgot the ren-

dezvous. Had he planned it, he could not have succeeded better, and the consequence was that the girl, beside herself at such seeming contempt, called on *him*, and . . . . Goethe, a great authority in matters of this kind, says, 'Approach women tenderly, and you may have a chance; perhaps he who behaves in a bold and reckless manner will get on still better, but he who seems to care but little whether he pleases or displeases, he who offends, is sure to succeed;' and Berlioz offended, and without even wishing it—he succeeded.

The eccentric kindness of his heart is shown in the following short sentences from his diary. As before mentioned, he had fallen in love with the 'fair Ophelia,' Miss Smithson. After his return from Italy, he found that she had herself formed an English company, returning to Paris as directress, hoping to meet with the same success as she had had two years before. 'She had relied,' he says, 'that *naïve* artist, on the constancy of Parisian enthusiasm. But Shakespeare was no longer a novelty for this public, frivolous and movable as a wave;' and having been introduced

to her, he says her affairs went from bad to worse. 'Elle est ruinée, elle se casse la jambe—je l'épouse.' Here is the impulse, but how long did it last? I knew him with his third wife, who positively ill-treated him. In the midst of a rehearsal at Baden-Baden, she shouted ''Ector!' with a six yards accent on the second syllable, simply to tell him there was a draught from an open window. He lost her, however, like the others, without too much despair.

When he married Miss Smithson, he did what Talleyrand so significantly and practically called, 'C'est plus qu'un crime, c'est une faute.' Her family would not hear of it, yet being English and of age she did not mind; but his family, holding in sacred execration all those who have anything whatever to do with the stage, formally opposed his marriage, so that he was obliged to make what the French law calls '*les sommations respectueuses*,' a legal farce, which consists in sending father or mother, or both, a stamped paper (*papier timbré*), by which the parent is summoned to consent to the marriage. Of course the parent refuses to consent, but here appears the

wisdom of the law, which allows one month to pass, and then the marriage, which without the consent of the parents was an impossibility six weeks ago, becomes perfectly legal; the day after one month of the sending of the summons having passed, you can marry as you please.

Of course the marriage turned out very ill. A German proverb says, 'When misery enters the door, love rushes out of the window.' It turned out badly, as everybody had foreseen. Had they been very happy everybody would have foreseen it too, for nobody ever is wiser than everybody.

Voltaire said, 'Il y a toujours quelqu'un qui aura plus d'esprit que vous, c'est tout le monde.' Do what you like, let matters take any turn you please, you will always meet some friend who is sure to say, 'Of course, didn't I tell you so?' On 'Change they have a capital way of treating these prophets. You go there and say accidentally, 'I fancy that South-Easterns will rise.' Instantly a broker pounces upon you, 'Will you buy South-Eastern? No? Did you not say just now they are sure to rise—why

refuse winning ready money, if you really believe what you say ?'

Have you ever played whist with a wise partner, who when the fifty-two cards are on the table, says to you in the condescending way of the superior player, 'Why did you not play the queen of hearts ? I had the ace ; we should have been sure to make the trick.' How very kind, is it not ? When everybody knows what everybody had ! With what deep sagacity those great meteorologists find out that it rained yesterday ! With what lavish generosity those prophets refuse to make a fortune by betting five minutes before the race on the horse that wins, and which five minutes after the race they will tell you, 'Of course, he *could* not but win ; look at his legs ; why, a blind man must see it.' And why did they not see it until the feat was accomplished ?

I now come to an incident in Berlioz's 'Memoirs' which he has treated rather elaborately, and which has occasionally been doubted. I happen to know that it was exactly as he states, yet I am surprised to find it printed. It is clear that the trick in question was not acci-

dental, but intentional; and it throws a glaring light on the jealousy of an otherwise great conductor, so much so that after his telling me all about it, and consulting with another friend, I advised Berlioz to keep it out of his 'Memoirs;' but people ask your advice in the hope that you will come to the same conclusion as they did, and when you do not, they follow their own inspiration. After we were all well agreed that it should not be published, he published it. The affair in a few words is this: Berlioz, by force of his genius, had taken a position which vexed all the orthodox musicians, who saw in him a violation of their conservative school. Moreover, finding that nobody was able perfectly to conduct his difficult scores, he had taken to conducting them himself—another offence to established conductors. When, therefore, the 'Requiem,' of which I have spoken, was to be performed, and instead of Berlioz, Habeneck was entrusted with the conductor's bâton, Berlioz, vaguely fearing some misfortune, remained behind the *chef d'orchestre*, watching his movements closely. At the moment when those terrible trumpet-calls, in the 'Tuba mirum,' are to

explode from four orchestras in the four angles, waiting for the sign of the conductor, Mr. Habeneck lowered his bâton and took snuff. Without Berlioz's energetic presence of mind the great effect, and with it the whole composition, would have been lost. But seeing Habeneck's inaction he jumped forward: 'Je n'avais que mon bras,' he said, 'mais je l'étendis et tous les orchestres m'obéirent.' From thence to the end he conducted with the greatest success, and Habeneck said to him:

'What a fright I had! Without you we were lost.'

'Je le sais bien,' said Berlioz, transfixing him with his eye; but he never added another word.

Most interesting is his account of the rapidity with which the ideas came into his head, too quickly for him to note all down, so that he invented a sort of musical stenography to avoid losing thoughts through want of time for fixing them on the paper. Perhaps the reader is not aware of the complication of an orchestral score, and may learn with some degree of interest how the composer with his

pen and ink creates and hears in his mind the combined effects of the various instruments which form the orchestra. The proceeding is as follows: On a sheet of paper which contains as many lines (staff) as there are instruments, the composer, dividing the orchestra into three groups, wood, brass, and string, has to write every note which every instrument plays, so that the ensemble may produce the effect which he expects from it. He therefore writes what the piccolo has to play on the top, under it flute, then clarinet, horn, cornet, bassoon, ophicleide, first and second violin, viola, violoncello, double bass, harp and drum. That is to say, one chord taken by all these instruments at once implies one or more notes to be written for each of them. As this forms only one chord and bar, and the 'Requiem' contains, say, thousands of bars—having, moreover, in the 'Tuba mirum' four extra orchestras besides chorus and solo voices—you can imagine how quickly a conductor must glance over the whole length of the page, and see and signal his entry to each musician! The moment of which I spoke above was, moreover, one where the move-

ment suddenly changed, and was consequently of vital importance.

It will therefore be equally clear that a conductor must have a prodigious musical memory if he can, as Dr. Richter usually does, conduct such a score by heart, never forgetting to beckon to any instrument at the very second it is expected to enter. I say a prodigious musical memory, because the faculty of remembering is sometimes a very curious one. One man may, as Richter for instance, know a number of scores by heart, another may keep an incredible number of figures in his remembrance, and yet not be able to retain the smallest musical theme. The Emperor Napoleon III., who never forgot a man he had once spoken to, could so little remember a musical theme that you might have played the same thing twice over to him, and given it two different names, and he never would have known it. An example of another kind of most astounding memory is the winner of the National Chess Tournament, Mr. Zuckertort. He is not only capable of playing one game of chess by heart, *i.e.*, without ever looking at the board, and on being told his adversary's

move, instantly replying with his countermove and keeping the position, continually altered, in his head ; but he played sixteen games at the same time in the same way. That is to say : before each of sixteen tables sat a player with a board, and they informed him after each other of their respective moves ; he replied, and never confounded one position with another, nor one game with another; never made a false move, but when false moves were made on purpose to test him, twice detected the wrong direction. He performed an especially curious feat in the house of a friend where there was a whist-party : he played a game of chess by heart with some one who sat in the adjoining room, and when the cards for whist were dealt, he looked once through his cards, then put them away, and each time his turn came he mentioned the card he wished to play, all the while continuing his chess game, and never keeping his chess or his whist partner waiting one minute for the necessary move.

Berlioz also had a wonderful memory. One of his great pleasures was to conduct the overture to Spontini's 'Vestale' by heart,

usually crying while he conducted. Of course you know the tears in Frenchmen's eyes, particularly when their nerves are overwrought, do not signify anything extraordinary. Berlioz was often annoyed by interruptions when composing, and he speaks with deep pain of the suffering which his *idées supprimées* caused him. So Dumas the elder told me once that he was continually interrupted while working, until at last 'I fall ill,' he said, 'de mes idées cassées.' Then when the doctor forbids any visitor to be admitted, while lying in bed quietly, 'mes idées se resoudent, et je guéris.' Berlioz had a perpetual struggle between the overpowering desire to put on paper the ideas pouring into his pen, and the impossibility to find time 'pour faire bouillir le pot.' One day unexpected aid came providentially. He gave a concert in which he conducted one of his great Symphonies. The success was unprecedented, and perfectly exhausted he sat down to rest, when a gentleman, thin, long, dark, and bony as a skeleton, with long hair and black eyes, in a state of great excitement—making, so to say, an unholy impression, so pale and

dark and unearthly looking was he — came on the stage with long strides, led by a little boy, and made straight for Berlioz. When he had reached Berlioz's seat, he knelt down, before the whole orchestra, and kissed his hand. It was Paganini! The next morning the same little boy, Paganini's son, brought him a letter, and when Berlioz made a movement to open it, the boy stopped him and said: 'Papa hopes you will read the letter when you are alone,' and immediately vanished. When Berlioz was alone he read the letter, in which Paganini said that Beethoven being dead, Berlioz alone could revive him, and asked Berlioz, as a homage to his great genius, to accept the enclosed. The 'enclosed' was the following small but weighty little note: 'Je prie Monsieur le Baron de Rothschild de vouloir bien remettre à M. Berlioz les 20,000 francs que j'ai déposés hier chez lui à cette fin.' Such unequivocal homage (£800) would certainly flatter the *amour propre* of a cooler man. I leave the reader to imagine the effect it produced on Berlioz, who wrote and tore up four letters one after another, none having fire and flame enough to express his gratitude.

Rendered for some time independent through this money, which, by-the-bye, forty-five years ago represented a much more important sum than it would to-day, he spent seven months in writing the symphony 'Romeo and Juliet,' which he corrected, filed, and polished for years. When it was engraved he corrected all the faults he could find, and one day handed it to me and said: 'Look what a time it takes, from such a legible hand as mine is, to get a properly corrected copy!' I had not looked through it a quarter of an hour, before I came to a page where for the life of me I could not understand certain harmonies, until I found that the tenor part had a wrong key (the soprano key), which of course totally altered the notes. My patient research discovered even more faults, so that at last he gave me a fully corrected copy of the orchestral score, and writing my name on the title-page he added, 'Souvenir admiratif.—H. Berlioz.' This copy, which no money could have bought from me, together with a copy of the opera 'William Tell,' which Rossini had given me, writing a whole page on it, in his dear old hand, were both stolen from me in America,

and most likely sold for ten cents a pound as paper to wrap cheese in!

I pass over Berlioz's many travels, the wonderful greeting he received from Schumann and Mendelssohn at Leipzig, the nearly royal reception granted him at St. Petersburg by that wonderfully musical and irresistibly amiable Grand Duchess Helen, who received and lodged him in her palace, put a court carriage at his disposal, took all his concerts especially under her patronage, and sent him back to Paris loaded with glory, money, and that sweetest of all satisfactions, *l'amour propre flatté*. His heart, however, was bleeding, amid all the triumphs he was honoured with in Russia, in England, in Germany, because he wanted to be the great man of his own country. And notwithstanding the proverb, he was a prophet in his own country, for some people, only he wanted universal recognition. And what he was irritated at was the opposition of certain cliques and writers; nothing is more amusing to see than his remarks on Fetis, who reproached him with having repeatedly written two notes (in the 'Marche des Pélerins

d'Harold') 'which enter not properly in the harmony of the chords,' an observation which he declares, and which actually is, incorrect. But he, the critic, who had often severely, though perhaps not unjustly, taken so many composers to task, adds: 'I was at first tempted to write to a paper about it, but I always thought it best to reply nothing to critics!' Sic vos non vobis!

With what enthusiasm did Berlioz speak of the reception in London of the Ninth Symphony, of all the rehearsals he had; how he divided the hours of his day into periods of time to rehearse with the different groups of instruments, etc.; how he conducted, and of the wonderful reception this immense work, so long misunderstood, enjoyed from the English people—those 'unmusical shopkeepers,' who, I daresay, by this time know Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as well as the French people know 'Au clair de la lune.'

Of course Berlioz was not loved and admired by everyone in France, and there can be no doubt that many even of those who could not help admiring him took good care not to

say so. But had not Wagner, had not Rossini and Beethoven to put up with those who considered everybody who would not walk in the old track not only bold innovators, but mad? Krebs, the Hamburg (then the Dresden) Kapellmeister, told Berlioz with a sincerity worthy of the frank German nation, after the great success which some of his compositions had met with in a concert conducted by himself in Germany: 'My dear M. Berlioz, in a few years your music will be known all over Germany: it will become very popular, and that is a great misfortune. What imitations will it provoke: what a style, what follies! It would be better for musical art that you had never been born.' There is a way of paying compliments! And whose fault is it that apes don't come up to the sublime original, and what real harm does that do? *They* would never have become serious artists, and their *cabrioles* will be forgotten when the masterworks will continue to live as models for devoted students. How often, I might say how uniformly, does it not happen that that unbearable scourge, mediocrity, swears by a name, but without the slightest knowledge or

understanding of what it is doing, a mania which Berlioz himself caricatured by a most amusing example. A painter, one of his friends, invited him once to a party where he did not exactly know what to do with himself. I remember when Dumas (the father) gave one of his grand evening parties where you met all Paris—that is, that part of Paris which is worth knowing—a lady asked him the next day : ' I suppose you had lots of good music ?' ' No,' he said. ' Not ?' she asked, quite astonished ; ' but what did you do ?' ' *Causer*,' said Dumas ; and how interesting, how amusing, how instructive were those *causeries intimes !* There are numbers of people who cannot understand how to while away an evening except by dancing or making some sort of music, when a dozen young ladies, after having insisted for a quarter of an hour that they were really not prepared to sing anything, send downstairs for a Pandora-box of songs and pieces which they are prepared to discharge upon the innocent audience. Napoleon I. was once asked to order a great artist, who would not dare to resist him, to sit down and play something : ' I would not mind asking

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him to sit down,' said the great Emperor, 'but who will ask him to get up again?' Those pianists *font des manières* before they sit down, but after that you cannot see the end of their amiability.

To return to Berlioz: he did not play cards, and would not join the gossipers. In Vienna it once happened (you see, I pass from one story to another) that during a large ball a young man stood 'unoccupied,' whilst many wallflowers would have been happy to engage his attention. The host, seeing this valuable being idle, addressed him: 'Oh, Mr. N., you don't dance; how is this?' 'Oh, please, I don't know how to dance.' 'Would you perhaps like a game of chess with my brother-in-law?' 'Oh, please, I don't play chess.' 'Oh, I have it,' said the host; 'over there are three whist-players, anxious to find a "fourth;" will you take a hand?' 'Oh, please, I don't play whist?' 'Why, then, it seems you do nothing but feed!' exclaimed the indignant host. Not so, Berlioz. He did not dance or gossip, but he took an album, and wrote a charming, quaint

little melody, and for mere fun put under it the name of Ducré, 'composer of the sixteenth century.' Instantly the interest of people, who even in those days were inclined to pay more for cracked old Worcester or crown Derby than for a perfect modern article, was excited, and the admiration for that thoroughly lost old style knew no bounds. A few days afterwards a lady told the host: 'There is music, there is melody! Ce n'est pas votre M. Berlioz qui aurait pu faire cela.' This was too much for the friend, and he let the story out, and told her that Berlioz was really the composer. You think she then admitted her injustice? 'Alors votre M. Berlioz,' she said, 'n'est qu'un impertinent.' Have you ever known a lady to be wrong?

It happened to me, who write these lines, to meet with one of those Wagner-Fetish adorers who need only be told that a certain piece is a composition of Wagner's, to find it immortal, be it the 'Ratcatcher's Daughter.' Once he so exasperated me with his phrases that I said to him: 'I bet that I will play you a small thing by an

amateur, and another by Wagner, and you will never be able to tell me which is Wagner's.' 'I bet you any amount,' he said, 'I will.' Very well, then, I sat down to the piano. He was rather quiet during the first piece, but barely had I begun the second one when he exclaimed: 'Oh, do not go one bar further; this is Wagner.' 'I congratulate you,' I said; 'you have won your bet. Here is the MS. of both pieces. A friend of mine wrote them both yesterday.' Tableau!

Berlioz was quite right when he said: 'Write a brilliant nothing of very superficial force, you will find twenty publishers ready to buy it, eventually to cover it with gold. But be careful never to develop a serious idea in grand style, it will be difficult to find anyone to print it; and should you find one, he would not sell it.' And he says that the only thing which consoles him is that in Vienna, London, or anywhere, it is the same as in Paris, where large sums are paid for valses of a certain celebrity, whereas Beethoven received £12 for the Symphony in C minor. But is that astonishing? Certainly

against a hundred people who understand, and of those only a few who would buy, a Beethoven score, there are ten thousand who appreciate, and are most of them quite ready to buy, a waltz or a ballad. The publisher, of course, pays only for what he expects to be repaid for. It must be with him a question of sale, not of merit. Berlioz quotes a letter *à l'appui* addressed to Queen Elizabeth by a troop of unknown actors, among whom, however, there is the signature of one not so entirely unknown, viz., William Shakespeare. They collectively call themselves 'Your poor players.' To become known and rich by fame wants time, and every composer does not find a King of Bavaria to lend (?) him money by the hundred thousand!

About Berlioz, the composer whose genius shows in operatic airs and duos as sweet as the notes of the nightingale, and in symphonic compositions with the powerful flight of an eagle, whose vast knowledge makes him the teacher of all who wish to benefit by his treatise on instrumentation, whose originality of ideas and combination of bold and new effects will always remain a study for musi-

cians, I have spoken at length ; but I wish to add that his habit of employing unusually great masses, is by no means to be mistaken for the desire to substitute quantity for quality. In instrumentation totally different effects are to be obtained with great numbers ; and just as a colonel may very well command five hundred or even a thousand men, but it requires a Moltke to direct a quarter of a million and move them all like the pieces on a chess-board, so it wants an extraordinary talent to know what particular effect you can produce by a small orchestra *in* a big orchestra, and then by grouping all the vocal and instrumental masses together. Berlioz often complained that he could not make enough money in France ; yet he gave concerts there which brought him sums hitherto unheard of in Paris : one in the Exhibition brought 32,000 francs, a sum never reached before. True, he had such expenses of copy, instruments, carpenters, etc., that all the profit which remained was £32. But this can scarcely be laid to the fault of the public, who by their liberal patronage had rendered the realization of his extravagant dreams possible.

Berlioz's injustice towards his own country, with such receipts in one single concert, becomes patent when we see that in St. Petersburg, where his first concert brought 18,000 francs, he said that he looked south-westward, and pitied his countrymen; and that he did the same in Vienna and London. I was present in Vienna when he was received by Baron Lannoy, the President of the Society of the Friends of Music, who *read* a very poor French speech, to which Berlioz, *ex improviso*, made a reply, wonderful in style and language, and with that purity which made him one of the first writers in France. For there is not a country under the sky where those who write know their own language less thoroughly than the French do—a fact all the more glorious that they very rarely know any other language. It is well known that for a long time their best writer was a lady, George Sand. Through a long period of sixty years, Victor Hugo, Louis Blanc, Madame Dudevant, and Hector Berlioz were recognised as the only *pure* writers. The serious studies which Berlioz made before throwing off the fetters that prevented his

becoming a musician are probably the foundation of his irreproachable style ; but, as I said before, he was unjust towards his own country. It is true that he found most sincere admirers in this country, but so he did in Paris; and the large amount of money he lost in London through the eccentric, unbusinesslike management of Jullien, of whom he gives a very full account, never made him severe on England.

With the great admiration and the deeply friendly feelings so many Germans, English, Russians, and Frenchmen had for Berlioz, they cannot, for all that, acquit him from the reproach of vanity and eccentricity. I do not believe that his vanity was excessive, though feeling his superiority he must have naturally become soured by the opposition of the incapable and ignorant, as well as of the capable and envious; among the latter Cherubini and Habeneck, two of the most meritorious musicians of his time. However, this vanity, which he generally cleverly concealed, really existed, and leaks out in unguarded moments. For instance, when he arrived at the Prussian frontier, the officer in

charge asked his name. 'Hector Berlioz,' he of course replied.

'What! Hector Berlioz, *rien que ça?*' screamed the officer, jumping down from his seat, his *képi* in hand, which he had rigorously kept on his head before he knew to whom he spoke.

Berlioz relates this with pardonable complacency, and he takes the opportunity of stating how he told his father; and three times in one page he repeats that '*rien que ça?*' which flattered him so immensely. If I insist on this pardonable little trait, it is because it throws the light of the philosopher's bull's-eye on a character to be studied; and, although I had the greatest personal regard for him and occasion for personal gratitude concerning his *feuilletons* (here comes in *my* '*rien que ça*'), I must in truth admit that—without giving way to such violent injustice and partiality as Richard Wagner frequently, not to say perpetually, did—Berlioz, who wrote the most admirable French, the most instructive criticisms, the most brilliant and *spirituel* style, could not help being occasionally more kind to friends, and more bitter to real or imaginary

adversaries, than was strictly just, especially as, on certain occasions, his satire cruelly wounded. Berlioz allowed nobody to talk him out of his opinion, which was more esteemed, as it was more penetrating, than that of any other musician. There was nothing small, nothing mean about the man: he was a great and liberal genius, thoroughly free from petty considerations, only too enthusiastic for what he found really great, too thankful for small or great services rendered, and naturally incensed at nonentities and mediocrities pushing to the fore and demanding his complicity in proclaiming them worth the attention of the public.

Can it be wondered at that he had the majority against him, as every conscientious critic must have?

One word more. I am not a lady, yet I add a few lines, because a lady wishes me to say what she considers necessary—and I should like to see the one among my readers who could refuse what a lady has decided he should do. I write about Berlioz, one of the giants of this century; but I give neither a criticism of his works, so numerous and so immense that

only a book could do them justice; nor do I pretend to give references like a dictionary of musicians. It is, however, right that I should say, so my lady thinks, that Berlioz died on the 9th of March, 1869, after having in vain tried to make the lady whom he loved when twelve years old take such an interest in him as his surprisingly elastic heart wished—that is, to marry him, even after having been separated from her forty-nine years, and she being six years older than he! I know that most men will consider this ridiculous; but will the ladies find such extraordinary fidelity ridiculous? A fidelity after having loved others in the meantime! I know a lady who has the art of making you listen to the most extraordinary arguments, and always adds by way of apology the two words: But still! So many ladies will read this and say: To make a love-declaration to a lady of sixty-seven when you are sixty-one, because as a boy of twelve (that was forty-nine years ago) you loved her, *is* absurd—BUT STILL . . . Now allow me to say that I have been induced by many friends who knew, appreciated, and loved Berlioz, to give what I knew of him

through my personal impressions. He was a true and dear friend of mine, always ready unaffectedly and kindly to advise and help, and if I have gone to too great a length about what may not interest the general public so much as myself, I hope you will forgive me. In paying my humble tribute to a truly great man I may have tried even your patience, gentle ladies—But still . . .

CHOPIN.

AMONG the great pianist-celebrities of this century Chopin stands in a certain sense alone. It is the misfortune of the piano not to give forth its real music, unless the performer happens to possess very extraordinary qualities, both mental and physical. Hence the eagerness of all those who wish to distinguish themselves on that instrument to develop their mechanical skill, in order before all things to overcome difficulties of fingering. For this purpose they devote an incredible number of hours and much patience to the acquirement of that physical dexterity, that flexibility of wrist and finger which is necessary, not only to astonish people, but—sweetest of all satisfactions—to surpass all rivals. But patience is the common

good of many, and figures can always be added to, so that he who studies ten hours a day may find himself inferior to him or her who practises twelve hours. Quantity in fact can always be beaten, but not quality, as I said some years ago to an American manufacturer at the exhibition in Boston. (Do not correct me, I mean Boston, not Philadelphia.) There they had the sublime idea of giving Verdi's Anvil Chorus from 'Il Trovatore,' accompanied by fifty blacksmiths with fifty anvils, and—most delicate addition—ten real guns, which, at a given sign from the conductor, were fired off, one every minute. You should have seen the knowing, deeply-satisfied look with which the gentleman mentioned winked at me at every boom! as much as to say, 'You cannot beat that. You may have a chorus entirely consisting of Italian voices, or your famous Lancashire girls, aye, and the best orchestra under Sir Michael Costa; but you have never had any guns. Listen—boom!' and he drew himself up, never saying a word, too proud for that, but expecting to see me crushed by the magnitude of the demonstration. When it was

nearly finished, I probably did not appear to him sufficiently 'flattened,' for he said :

'Well, sir, what is your opinion of this ?' —Boom !—'There ! you hear this ? What do you think of it ?'

'Undoubtedly,' I replied, with all the hypocrisy I could muster at the time —'undoubtedly the most sonorous effect in music I ever heard.'

'I should think so !' he replied. 'Can't be beaten !'

'Well,' I timidly observed, 'as to "*can't be beaten*," I am not so sure of that.'

'What, sir ! Do you mean to underrate our grand demonstration ? I say it can't be beaten !'

'Well, come now,' I ventured to say, 'suppose somebody in Europe, in a small place, say London, should get together twenty-five guns and seventy-five blacksmiths, would that not be even a greater sonority ?'

'Never,' he said, 'never ! First of all, it would not be American, and that concludes the matter. I tell you this can't be beaten, and you know it. *Good*-morning !' and I

dare say he left disgusted with me, an unbeliever in American infallibility.

Well, just as the number of guns and blacksmiths might be increased, so might be the number of hours for exercise; and, since so many pianists represent literally nothing but the number of hours passed at the instrument, there are, of course, many rivalling each other in such mechanical feats, like those of conjurors or dancers on the tight-rope, or other dexterity acquired by mere patience. Thalberg, who was endowed by nature with upholstered finger-tips, which gave him such a charming touch; Liszt, whose wrist was so light in octave playing that you would have thought in certain moments the hand might fly off altogether; Rubinstein, whose Kalmuck strength is such that sometimes people look under the piano to see whether he did not smash through the key-board and bring his hand out *under* it—they belong to the effect-producing virtuosi, who, still with a fine conception of the great masters, do not lay all the stress on an astonishing execution; but the latter is just what the mass of the people want—they want

to be astonished, they crave the excitement of the moment.

Not so with Chopin. He, whom Schumann, no mean judge, called the boldest and loftiest *poetic* spirit of the age, treated execution not as his highest aim, nor as a means of exciting astonishment, nor as a race in which to get rid of so many hundreds of notes per minute; Chopin studied execution as the painter studies colour and colour-grouping—he studied execution, that he might not be hindered when the florid Byzantine style of his tone columns rendered *fioriture* desirable, and required high execution for their neat and clear performance. To his deep-suffering, poetic soul, singing, expression, poetry were the chief attractions, and therefore, both in his compositions and in his playing, his plaintive, original style formed the special feature and novelty.

It has often been stated that an all-pervading patriotism, despair at seeing his beloved country subjugated and tyrannized over, was the primary cause of that melancholy poetical charm so prominent in nearly all his works, large or small. Others think that his

excessively sensitive nature was especially given to creating this dolorous kind of work, because he was sick, weak, and suffering from an over-excited nervous system. Doubtless both reasons, more particularly the latter, had a great deal to do with it, for, say what we may, the coats of the stomach have a greater influence on the free working of our brains than we like to admit. 'C'est le ventre qui gouverne le monde,' said Napoleon I., who knew something about human weakness. Let anybody, however gifted, try after a plentiful dinner to sit down and write a delicate sentimental piece, or let him fast for a day and then give birth to an heroic march, and I am very much afraid the sentimental piece will sound somniferous and the heroic march will be a poor performance.

The state of our physique is of paramount importance in writing.

And so it was with Chopin, that most inspired pianist, and with Berlioz, the incarnate revolutionist of orchestral works.

To be appreciated at his full value, Chopin had to do one thing, viz., to die. It is the privilege of mediocrity to be understood with-

out discussion, but those who run before their time cannot expect to be recognised, and that is why prophets in their own day are not believed. It has been said, and I fancy rightly, that whenever a young genius, an innovator, a man who does not do what is usually done, or does that which he does in an unusual way, he is instantly called before the areopagus of the dead, and, so to say, the living are killed, crushed by the dead. When we have had time to understand and to get accustomed to the style of the dead, then no vanity is hurt by acknowledging their greatness, and we run no risk, as we might do, by having to admit the superiority of the living. The real reason at the bottom of all the opposition which genius so often meets with, besides jealousy, is a disease common to many men, which I may call thought-idleness. People may have an idea, a thought, but they are too idle to think that thought thoroughly through to its logical conclusion, and it is only the *esprits d'élite*, the searchers for truth, the philosophers, who have the patience, the power, and the perseverance to think a thought really to its end. It rarely happens,

if a new idea arises, that the serious and thorough consideration is given to it without which the new remains merely the unaccustomed. Chopin came in the midst of the revolution which created romanticism in poetry, in music, in art generally. He was unconcerned about laws and rules laid down, not from ignorance or irreverence, far from it, but from the proud desire to go his own way, where he might open a new path, and not tread the tedious old beaten track. So he followed his own course, both in the idea and in the mode of expressing it. Of course he met with opposition on the part of those who found it more easy, and more convenient for their idleness, not to weary their brains with finding out whether this innovator was worth studying, but who simply echoed the reproach that he did not do as others had done before him.

A contributor to Grove's 'Dictionary of Music and Musicians' maintains, in the face of the biographers who state that Chopin was weak and suffering, that he was not so until the last ten years of his life. Chopin died at forty; he was certainly

not known before twenty-five; if he really had been suffering from a failing organization *only* for the last ten years of his life, does not that show that his constitution was broken at thirty? Then what does the difference amount to? Besides, it is acknowledged that there was consumption in his family; his gifted sister Emily died from it at the age of fourteen.

One thing before all must be conceded to Chopin—an interesting and decided originality. Whether he was moved by his sufferings politically or physically—whether the persecution of his countrymen or his failing strength was the cause of his plaintive melodies, there they are, always attractive, always refined, always new. Complaining is never very heroic, yet there are two ways of making complaint. One is that of the beggar who, requiring your help, professes his own weakness, his inability to help himself, and thereby tries to excite your pity, not your interest; and that of the courageously, intensely, and undeservedly suffering man, who, although laying the undeniable fact before you, bears with courage, suffers with

resignation, and, too proud to whine and beg for advice, shows his resolve to carry a burden which must be borne, and thereby gains your sympathy and your interest. Chopin, like the man who changed everything he touched into gold, had the talent of ennobling the most common forms of music, and his valses, mazurkas, studies, are perfect gems. He had the strength to struggle without being subjugated, and he was weak only in one instance, where weakness cannot be a reproach to an artistic and romantic soul—that is, when he found another gifted being, who met him with uncommon impulse, and made him believe, as it so often happens, in the indissoluble eternity of the union of two minds. Alas! too soon it became evident that his too-confiding love-eager soul was doomed to disappointment, which had a fatal influence on his already shattered nerves, and his over-excited artistic organization. I said that this was the only proof of his weakness, because it was the weakness of the ivy, which wants a wall, a column, a trunk, to wind its branches lovingly round ; and faithful to the device : ' Je meurs où je m'attache,'

Chopin had to submit to the fate of the ivy. There are men, great men, who love strongly, and who sustain the winding plant like an oak-tree, spreading protecting branches against all accidents. There are others, and such was Chopin, who find in a woman's wilful but strong nature the support without which their own weakness would not enable them to walk the sinuous path of life. If they are not so happy as to find a soul strong and generous enough to support them without taking advantage of this inverted mission of strength, they must break down physically and mentally.

To understand Chopin rightly, it is necessary to comprehend the struggle which his passion waged against the weakness of his constitution, a weakness which prevented the possibility of adequate expression.

Chopin was like a lion imprisoned: his cage was his body—it broke his will, it hindered the powerful expression of his genius.

If I compare him to a lion imprisoned, I may perhaps be allowed to say that those who have not seen a lion free, and know him only behind secure and immovable bars,

which break his spirit as do the chains of a political prisoner buried in the subterranean mines of Siberia, have no more conception of what a lion is in freedom, than they can from a photograph an eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

It was my lucky escape from an encounter with the king of the desert which enables me to say this, because I have learnt from my own experience what it means to see that angry eye, once conscious of irresistible power, glaring at you, small and humiliated.

Chopin's lion soul imprisoned in a most fragile cage, naturally destroyed the weak fetter which prevented its free movement; and at the comparatively early age of forty, when a man is usually in the fullest enjoyment of his physical and mental powers, he died—sharing in this respect the fate of Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Mozart.

Chopin was born in 1809, of a French father and a Polish mother. He was distinguished and aristocratic in appearance, with silky golden hair and sky-blue eyes, rather effeminate-looking, tender-hearted, albeit

mildly sarcastic. The same refinement is seen in his work, which is carefully conceived, neatly and elegantly ornamented; but of much greater and more serious value than the elegant decoration is the deep, passionate feeling which pervades both his more voluminous and his smaller compositions. The same master-hand, the same careful elaboration, the same inspired pen, are visible in the two-page mazurkas or nocturnes, as in the *Ballades* and concertos. Great has been the astonishment of many people to see what Chopin was able to do with a mazurka. But they forgot that he was a Pole, and that Poles alone know what a mazurka is, just as the Austrians alone understand the real whirlpool of a waltz; the French, the incorporated grace of a contre-danse; and the South-Italians, the mad fury of the tarantella. The character of the nations is in each dance, and it is because the English are so collected and so calm —although sometimes they get suddenly excited and jolly—that the formal Sir Roger de Coverley, commencing so solemnly and ending in such fun, is their national dance.

Chopin had this great quality so agreeable

for the world, so happy for him who possesses it—he saw of everything only the beautiful side, and he was the most lenient, amiable judge of others, although most exacting towards himself. His mild satire, however, which I before mentioned, caught you sometimes even in its velvet paws. For instance, one of the millionnaire bankers of Paris once invited him to dinner, and barely was dinner over and the guests repaired to the drawing-room, than the host had the bad taste to show him a piano and at once to urge him to play something. Many people have this vulgar habit of making you unmistakably pay for your dinner. But Chopin turned round and deprecatingly replied: 'Mais, Monsieur le Baron, *j'ai si peu mangé!*'

Chopin, although he was the outcome of that period of romanticism which set itself up in opposition to the strictly classical, did not endorse the wild flights and eccentricities of the romantic school, which repelled him by too much realism. His hatred of what was not artistically beautiful went so far that though he adored the powerful imagination of Shakespeare, he made his reserve where he found the

characters 'too true,' not sufficiently devoid —for his sensitive nature—of the crude reality which gives such true life to Shakespeare's statuesque figures. One of the greatest judges in matters artistic, Lessing, in his essay on Æsthetics ('Vorschule der Aesthetik') says: 'What is not beautiful ought not to be made a subject for art'—'Was nicht schön ist, gehört nicht in die Kunst.' Of course Chopin's god was Mozart, whose marked simplicity yet never condescended to a crude or vulgar bar; so much so, that old Mozart, who was a good musician himself, reproached his son with appealing to the elevated taste only, and after hearing 'Idomeneo' he said to him: 'Wolferl' (diminutive of Wolfgang), 'believe me, you were wrong not to put in something for the long-ears.'

That so poetic a nature, one which so utterly repelled everything that was not thoroughly distinguished, should attract another organization as exalted as his own, and an equally eccentric one, dreaming of a life impossible to describe, but which may possibly exist in some planet, is not to be wondered at. These two natures forgot that whilst

they took their flight on supernatural wings towards the moon, they were sure to meet with the fate of that astronomer who, walking in the street, his eye unmoved and fixed on the stars, struck his foot against a stone, fell, and broke his neck. However dry reality may appear, however inspired a dream may be, life consists of positive facts which must be taken note of; and although you may enjoy in a dream the most rosy illusions, wherever the fairy-land be situated which is the scene of your dream, you must awake and breakfast or starve, and thus it was difficult for two people who lived on such exalted ideas, not to be at length reminded, by the weakness inherent to the human body, of the sad, unpoetical, but indispensable reality of butcher and baker.

Chopin was twenty-seven years old when symptoms of consumption appeared so decidedly, that it was thought unadvisable that he should continue to stay at Paris, and he went to the isle of Majorca with *her* . . . . Madame Armantine Lucile Aurore Dudevant — in literature known as George Sand—accompanied and nursed him as only a loving

woman can nurse the object of her affection. Chopin was both attracted and frightened by the superiority of this gifted woman, and avoided at first the *bas bleu*, a type which as a rule he abhorred. But George Sand had made up her mind to find her ideal in him, and the slight resistance only increased her determination. He therefore had no voice in the matter, as men very rarely have where ladies' will is concerned. I remember asking an excessively elegant young Frenchman who was celebrated for his numerous *bonnes fortunes*, how it was that he, so fond of fair golden hair, had had several well known adventures with raven-haired ladies, and at last even married a very dark brown girl. 'Mais, parce qu'elles l'ont voulu,' he said. ('Because *they* willed it so.') A man rarely marries the woman he desires, but the woman who wants him to want her. Madame Dudevant undertook to struggle with Chopin's disease, and for a time she succeeded. Would we not be justified in the belief that women are the stronger sex, when we see that they can do what no man could do, remain with the same perseverance, the same inexhaustible care and undisturbed

evenness of temper for weeks, for months at the bedside of a patient, be it a child or the man they love, without showing any sign of fatigue? But if Madame Sand was a woman and capable of all that sex's superhuman abnegation, she was French too, which excludes constancy, but recognises only one desirable object—*autre chose* (something else). It is not because they want a Republic that a French revolution upsets a Monarchy; it is not because they want a King that they try to upset the Republic; it is because they want —something else. The proof of it is, that the moment they have it, their heart yearns after what they have just left, because that in its turn has become the ever-desired—something else. That national fickleness at last overcame Chopin's friend too, and not heeding his adoration of the 'genius who had conquered him from death,' which never diminished to his dying day, she suddenly found that she had to leave him to his cough and to his Muse, and, as the French say, 'Ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut;' as she had decided, so she did. As to himself, he died from it—that was all.

His last appearance in public took place in the summer season of 1848 in London, where he was heard in private and in public. At the memorable evening party at Stafford House, which the Queen left with the words, 'I leave your palace to return to my house,' Chopin was introduced to her Majesty by the Duchess of Sutherland, mother of the present Duke, a majestic and most attractive lady, and the kindest patron of art known. On his return to Paris, he imagined a task which of all men was impossible for him. He began writing a piano manual. A few pages, and he gave it up. He lingered on for some time, then he got suddenly worse. At his death, beside his sister and some very intimate friends, was present the Countess Delphine Potocka, one of the most gifted of that gifted Polish nation: handsome, intelligent, thoroughly artistic, the possessor of one of the most beautiful voices. With the last strength Chopin could gather, he asked her to sing him that famous air, 'Pietà Signor,' composed by Stradella, of which it is said that two assassins, who had been hired to murder him, arrived at his house while he

was singing it, and although they approached him cautiously with criminal intent, they were so moved by the beauty of the performance that they dropped their daggers and fell on their knees before him. This same air Madame Potocka sang to Chopin, and when she had finished it, he prayed to hear it a second time, and she, although barely able to control her deep emotion, had the sublime courage to sing it over again.

Schumann compares Chopin's compositions to Byron's creations, 'so tender and bold, so full of love and scorn.' About the *Ballades* he says, 'The refined, *spirituel* Polish gentleman who moves in the highest aristocratic circles of Paris, is easily recognised by his refined style; but the poetic aroma of his work ought not to be analyzed.'

Madame Sand, and numerous biographers after her, gave Chopin's birthday as March 1st, 1810. This date was corroborated by the Abbé Liszt, who states that Madame Catalani gave Chopin a watch, on which was engraved: 'From Madame Catalani to young Frédéric Chopin, aged ten years; 1820.' But Liszt

himself adds that Chopin was a very dreamy child, and never knew his age for certain. Karasowski, who five years ago published one of the most reliable biographies of Chopin, gives the year of his birth authentically as 1809, and mentions that on numberless occasions, even on Chopin's tombstone in Père la Chaise, the year has been erroneously given as 1810. Chopin's nerves were over-excitable when he was a child; whenever he heard music he was impressed by it to such a degree that he usually burst out crying. But at an early age he learned how to control to some extent this weak organization; and he studied so successfully that when only nine years old he made his *début* in a concert. His mother, anxious before all to adorn her pet, put him on a chair, to see whether there was a flaw in his appearance, and rendered him especially happy by adding to his natural charms a little velvet coat and a lace collar. After the concert, where he was very much applauded, his mother asked him what the public had liked best. 'Oh, mamma,' he said, 'I certainly believe it was my collar.' The success of this concert

launched him instantly into aristocratic circles, which contributed much to give him the refinement and the delicate taste that made him all his life keep aloof from anything common or vulgar.

It so happened once that Chopin accidentally struck a chord of rather distant intervals, which it required a bigger hand than his to span at one touch. In order to enable himself to do this, he invented, just as Schumann did, a contrivance with which to stretch the fingers, and not only did he often employ such chords, but he wrote a study on purpose for such *arpeggiati* chords of considerable stretch. It was fortunate that Chopin was put under a master (Elsner), who, although a very learned man, was liberal enough to reply when some scholar drew his attention to the unusual work of Chopin : 'Let him alone ; he does not tread in the beaten track, because he finds one of his own. He will, if left to himself, produce works for the piano of an originality unprecedented to this day.'

Although Chopin's nature was intensely poetical, he was quite capable of playing

pranks, and not only enjoyed good fun, but showed great talent in amateur theatricals. To illustrate the first part of this statement, it may suffice to say that knowing a landed proprietor, who was very rich but very mean, and who had contracted to sell to a certain Jew a quantity of oats at a fixed price, Chopin wrote him a letter in a disguised hand, and very cleverly imitated both the poor Jew's style and his mistakes. In this supposed letter the Jew positively declined to have the oats at the price agreed to. The landed proprietor, in a fearful rage, sent for the Jew, and would very likely have given him a good beating, had not Chopin preferred admitting his guilt and confessing the whole story.

He loved to hear Polish peasants play or sing their national melodies, and was always anxious to find out where those pretty mazurkas, etc., came from. There is in his Opus 13 a Kujawiak and Krakowiac—which latter word means a dance from Cracovia, just as valses have been called Viennoise because they came from Vienna—of surpassing beauty and passion. Chopin put

into it such a deep feeling, such dolorous, touching despair, that all kinds of interpretations were found for this inspired music. Some said the struggle of Poland against Russia, and the devastation of Poland, were indicated, in order to explain the motives and their passionate development.

The charm of national music—not only Polish, but Irish, Italian, Scotch, Swedish, any music really national — lies in its unartificial character, generally plaintive, sometimes warlike, but always in the true accent of nature. As to the Mazurs, I can speak from experience, because on a journey through Poland I suddenly heard such an interesting, sad motivo played on a flute — or what sounded like a flute —that I stopped the carriage; there were no railways at that time, and I sent for the Mazurek (the peasant who played). I asked him to play the melody again, which he did, and I bought his instrument, a most primitive one. I dare say I gave him the amount of twopence for it. He played, holding it down like a clarionet, but when I tried, I could do absolutely nothing with it; and it is

difficult to understand how with such a piece of wood, the holes badly bored and quite unevenly distributed, these men, who never learned how to play, can produce such sweet, touching notes. It is a custom in Poland—at least it was then—that on high holidays men and women travel about in small bands, and play and sing their compositions, which they could not write down if they were offered a million for the trouble. The music is sometimes dance music, sometimes a kind of long-drawn ballad. The Mazurs are a sort of modern troubadours, and are everywhere well received and rewarded. The music is in them, they have not learned it; they have learned nothing, very often not even how to read—they have learned no more than the lark, the thrush, the canary; but they sing, and in a most charming, interesting manner too, because they are to the manner born. So was Chopin. So must everyone be who wishes to become a real composer, for without the powerful basis of creation no great artistic result can be reached.

Fearful was the depression of Chopin's

mind and heart caused by that desperate Polish revolution in 1830, begun with hopes so sanguine, and so heroically sustained for a while, that even such calm observers as Börne once wrote, 'Is it really possible that the Colossus Russia may be overthrown by the baby Poland crawling between its legs and upsetting it?'—yet how determinedly and crushingly was it suppressed! Anxiety for his family increased Chopin's eagerness to return to Poland, but his father sternly forbade him.

He went to Paris, from which city he wrote the following remarkable observation: 'Everything is to be found here, good and bad, sublime and ridiculous. You may do just as you please: laugh, cry, go pleasure-hunting, or think of nothing but business—nobody takes any notice of you. I do not think that there is a city on earth where there are more pianists to be found—or—more donkeys.'

Nevertheless, he found enthusiastic critics in sufficient number to create and propagate his reputation in the enchanting city. His letters from Paris, in which it can clearly be

traced how his celebrity gradually increased, are sometimes very serious; then again a little adventure fills the space. Thus he tells us, that in the same house with him lives a tradesman who is out all day long. But his spouse, a very handsome young woman, has several times invited him during the cold days to take advantage of her new *calorifère* (a sort of iron stove). He did so once, but he says, 'I would rather not return there; her stove is warm, but so are her eyes, and I am afraid Monsieur *son époux* might give me a good thrashing if he found me too well established in his house.' If, however, *la chronique scandaleuse* be for once correct, he seems not always to have been either so scrupulous or so afraid of consequences. He passed, in fact, for the *coqueluche* (the pet) of Parisian ladies.

That his polished, perhaps at times over-polished, and ornamented playing was most effective in the salon, and could not be so well appreciated in big spaces, he found out when he gave a concert, crowded and patronized by the best society, aux Italiens, *i.e.*, in the Italian Opera House. The embel-

lishments, which would have lost all their point had he produced them with a loud sound, could not in that *pp* be caught by every ear, and he at once felt that he was not in that warm sympathetic *rapport* with the public which used to make him play his best. It is one of the blessings which railway travelling has favoured us with, that easy communication brings people to the theatre and the concert-room whom otherwise the distance and the difficulty of coming and returning home would have kept away. To accommodate those floating masses the concert-rooms, which previously were built with regard to the performance that was to be given there, are now built with an eye to business, viz., to cram in as much money as it is possible to get. The consequence is that the space is quite out of proportion to what can be produced and listened to comfortably, and inasmuch as human lungs cannot be built bigger than they ever were before, while the space which the voice has to travel over is so much larger, the singers are induced to shout and thereby to injure their organs; numbers of voices which with careful treat-

ment would have lasted a whole lifetime, are by this incautious proceeding destroyed in a few years. Chopin told Liszt after this concert : 'I ought not to play in public at all; that is your province, for where you cannot charm the public, you can at least astonish and crush it.'

Chopin's improvisations were among his most attractive performances. His poetic utterances would recognise no fetters, and he might in truth be said to be the inventor, at all events in the frequent use of it, of the *tempo rubato*, which means that no arbitrary rule of time should hinder the *épanchement* of his compositions. *Rubato* literally means 'robbed,' but he wrote it down, leaving to the performer's inspiration to decide how it should be used. When in 1835 he passed through Leipsic he had not time to arrange a concert, but he played privately for his great friends Mendelssohn and Wieck. The latter was incensed against Chopin, who was credited—most probably quite without reason—with having said that in Germany there was not a lady who could play his compositions.

Chopin would never have said so, even

had he thought so, because he was simply delighted with Clara Wieck's (afterwards Madame Schumann) performance of his compositions. The greatest judges of music, Berlioz, Moscheles, Mendelssohn, were unanimous in proclaiming him the most original, interesting pianist of the day. Mendelssohn with quiet sarcasm says of him: 'How happy I am in once again hearing a real musician, not one of those half-classical virtuosi, who would so much like to combine les honneurs de la vertu et les plaïsirs du vice in music.' How many hypocrites are always trying to do so in real life!

Chopin had an instinctive fear of incurable and of dying people: now, when General Cavaignac, the great Republican, felt his end approaching, he had only one desire—to hear Chopin. Louis Blanc, who is quoted in several biographies regarding the appalling scene which took place on that occasion, told me the story himself, which varies a little from the account he gave of it in his 'Histoire de la Révolution.' The fact is that Madame Cavaignac, the General's mother, asked Louis Blanc how they could render the fulfilment

of her son's desire possible. Louis Blanc did not know Chopin, but he knew Madame George Sand intimately, who at that time had great influence with Chopin. It was to her, therefore, that Louis Blanc appealed, begging her to accompany Chopin herself to General Cavaignac's house. She did so, and Chopin sat down to the piano, abandoning himself to his dreamy improvisations. While he was playing, they suddenly heard sobbing near the door, and turning round, they beheld General Cavaignac, who, dying, had got up from his bed, and, looking like a spectre, advanced, his arms outstretched towards the piano, frightening Chopin out of his wits. His mother in great anxiety rushed after him to bring him to bed again, but he said to her: 'Don't fear, mother. I heard the music of the spheres sung by angels; it did me good;' and with a smile of beatitude on his placid face he was brought back, and with what he called the celestial harmonies in his ears he ended his terrestrial sufferings.

How often does it happen in life that seemingly trifling circumstances have an important

influence on our destiny! Chopin one evening ascending the stairs of an aristocratic friend, heard the rustling silk of a lady's dress behind him, and a perfume of violets overcame him, so that he instinctively felt an attraction which impressed him ominously. He did not turn round, however, but sat quietly in his lady friend's salon listening to the conversation, and it was not until a great number of people had departed that he went to the piano and, before the more intimate friends of the house, began improvising. When he had done, the violet perfume overcame him again, but the lady whose dress seemed the source of this all-pervading fragrancy never approached him, although her dark eyes seemed to pierce his very soul. A few minutes later Liszt advanced towards him, that very lady on his arm, whose few, refined, flattering words, pronounced with that deep, warm, sympathetic contralto organ of hers, quite upset the excitable young pianist's brains. I need not say that this was George Sand. His love for her, when two of his own countrywomen to whom he had been engaged, had treacherously jilted him, was deep and true—whereas her love for him was

passionate, wild, uncontrolled, and went the way that such outbursts always go. He loved her without exaggerated protestations to the end of his life, while her straw fire rose up like a column towards heaven, and burnt itself out in no time. She was the woman of whom Alfred de Musset, another of her ephemeral flames, said : 'If I no longer believe in tears, it is because I have seen *her* cry.' ('Si je ne crois plus aux larmes, c'est que je l'ai vue pleurer.')

Chopin had studied the works of Sebastian Bach very much—more, indeed, than any other compositions, and he played them with wonderful precision. His own compositions he played in a manner which no other pianist could reach. The greatest pianists of his time, Liszt and Hiller, challenged him, and Chopin proposed that all three of them should play the famous Polish mazurka, 'Jeshtsho Polska nje skeenella' ('Poland is not yet lost'). Liszt began and did wonders; after him came Hiller, the classical player; but when Chopin took up the theme, both his rivals admitted that he had outdone their efforts. Perhaps I may be allowed

here to correct an error into which Chopin's otherwise exact biographer Karasowski has fallen. He speaks of little Filtsch as Chopin's pupil. I knew this marvellous little boy in Vienna, where the Countess Bánffy took care of his education. He was a pupil of Liszt, who made him come to Paris, where at the early age of thirteen he died. Though an undoubted genius, he was, even when a mere child, so spoiled that he could not bear the slightest criticism. What would have become of him no one of course can say; but as he was, he was most astonishing. Chopin's glory as composer, performer and teacher—the famous Princess Marcelline Czartoryska was one of his most gifted pupils—is quite great enough without there being any need to encroach on anyone else's triumphs. A model of a friend, a perfect gentleman, the most reliable man known, his slight and fragile body contained a strong and believing soul. When on his death-bed, he quietly talked to all his friends, asking them to arrange certain music at his funeral. Having all his life professed an adoration for Mozart, he begged that his

Requiem might be played for him. Suddenly he said, 'Maintenant j'entre en agonie;' and without complaint, gentle as a martyr, he passed away.

The greatest passion in his life, his love for George Sand, never took away a grain of his pride, and when he observed how her solicitude diminished and her sympathy for him began to cool down, he said to her: 'I become a burden to you; I go, and you shall never hear of me again;' and as he said it, he did it. And when later on the fickle Frenchwoman, in a salon, hidden behind an ivy screen, listening to his exquisite playing, suddenly burst out in a sob, and cried: 'Frédéric!' Chopin turned to her, became deadly pale, but without saying a single word quitted the room, and never spoke to her again.

His grave in Père la Chaise was for many years covered with flowers more thau any other grave. On All Souls' Day, even to this time, those of his pupils and friends who still live and love him, consider it their pious duty to bring what Chopin loved so much in life, and what are stamped on every one of his compositions—poetry and flowers.

GOUNOD.

FEW composers of the present time have aroused such violent controversy as Gounod. Indeed, it seems to become one of the conditions of celebrity to be violently discussed. Yet we must distinguish between the sort of discussion provoked by Gounod, and that by the great German composer Wagner. It is not too much to say that the most powerful adversary of Richard Wagner, the one who contributed more than any man to delay the recognition of his great qualities, and who caused the passionate dragging to light of his defects at the expense of the recognition of his genius—the man, in fact, who most seriously impeded his name from being more universally esteemed—was Wagner himself.

Giving way to blind passion in condemning

nearly every contemporary composer, belittling those who had acquired great reputation as the result of their undoubted merit, showing the blackest ingratitude to Meyerbeer, who had most kindly helped him and supported him when no one would acknowledge the merit of his works, attacking everybody who was not of his opinion, and every contemporary work that was not his own, with a violence which could not but make him numerous and powerful enemies, he had the additional misfortune to make friends and partisans, who as violently attacked what was not his as he had done himself. Yet if it had not been for the universal cry which all these polemics aroused and which made Wagner the most discussed of composers, continually kept before the eye of the public, whether ridiculed or attacked—if he had met with enemies diplomatic enough not to reply, not to discuss, not to mention his name for good or evil—he would have been silenced to death, for the noise which in their wrath his antagonists kept up was the very food for the glory of his name.

Not so Gounod. He takes good care to

attack nobody. His clerical inclinations and studies when a youth in Rome (it is surmised that he meant to take orders and become a priest), his natural pliability, his adroit humouring of all those whom he fancies may be of some use to him—his social quality, called diplomacy by one and Jesuitism by another, which met in exquisite union in Talleyrand—his velvet cat's-paw touch of every 'dangerous' topic of conversation, the unbounded amiability of a disposition always of the same opinion as the interlocutor—made Gounod a number of friends, not of that perilous kind from whom we pray, may the Lord deliver us! He was too unctuous to have anything like Wagner's passionately aggressive friends. Gounod's friends extolled his genius quietly, and were really useful in proclaiming him the apostle of the French School and the greatest living composer. His successes, counterbalanced by failures—the one as undeniable as the other—were, however, the source of another kind of controversy, much less personal, but not less useful. For, be it remembered, being made the subject of con-

tinued discussion, being always held up as a subject of importance, whether in an unconditionally laudatory sense or the reverse, that is what gives you a name, and I verily believe that it does not much matter whether newspaper articles and criticisms exalt a man's merit or quite unjustly detract from it; provided he be much talked about, he is pretty sure to come out of the fray with a great name.

Gounod is an enigma, like many great men. The doubt begins at his birthday. In biographical dictionaries Gounod is stated to have been born on June 17, 1818,* in Paris, his father being a painter, and his mother one of the most distinguished ladies of the period. It was she who gave him his first instruction in music. He entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1836, and won in 1837 a second prize, and in 1839 a first prize, the Prix de Rome—which entitled him to the journey to Italy—with a Mass, the forerunner of his early

* I shall presently have something to say about this supposed correct date, in which Vapereau, Fétis, Grove, etc., coincide.

favourite pursuit, sacred music. He was a pupil of Reicha in harmony, and of the famous Halévy in counterpoint. His second Mass (1841) was a great success, and won him the title of 'Maître de Chapelle Honoraire' for life, a distinction never before conferred on a *pensionnaire de l'Académie.*

Gounod's career is, if I may say so, an inverted pyramid. He began life successfully, though he wrote one opera after another without reaching the desired object. At last Goethe's masterpiece 'Faust' was accommodated to his requirements by Messieurs Michel Carré and Barbier, who in many instances copied Goethe's words verbatim—I mean, they translated Goethe's identical words; but then suddenly they changed, and, instead of gilding copper, they coppered gold, and transformed scenes of grand philosophy into very insignificant trickery. It must, however, be admitted that, whatever the faults of the libretto, and the heresy of desecrating a monument of classical art, it fulfilled its purpose—it furnished Gounod with opportunities for situations—with love music in the second act, military music and

ballet in the third, sacred music in the fourth, and a truly heroic trio in the prison scene of the last act. The genius which inspired him with the loveliest *duo* in the garden scene, with the most popular march and waltz, with excellent church music, as well as with the most effective and melodious ballet music, was recognised all over the world. 'Faust,' wherever it was played, in Europe and America, was an immense success, and flew with the name of the composer into those high regions of the Pantheon, the frontispiece of which bears the inscription: 'Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante!'

'Mireille,' the opera *à la couleur locale*, which he wrote immediately after 'Faust,' is undoubtedly a more homogeneous work, although not so strikingly effective. It made, nevertheless, little sensation in France, at any rate nothing comparable to the long-enduring sensation of 'Faust,' and none at all in any other country. Such is the fate of works. 'Faust,' his *chef-d'œuvre*, an opera translated into nearly every European language, brought its composer in England the sum of £80, whereas 'Mireille,' with-

out any effort whatever, received from England alone £1,400! You will think this very unjust. But it is not. 'Faust' was sold to an English publisher, on whose part it was at that time somewhat plucky to risk even £80 in the great expense of publication on a composer who had never had a big success either in England or anywhere else. But after 'Faust' had made that immense success, everybody thought what a great bargain a new work of Gounod's would be at *any* price, and he received very considerable pay, not for the work he sold, but as the composer of the work that had made him famous, and which led people to believe he would instantly produce a second success. Everyone said, how could such a work as 'Faust' be sold for £80? But who, my masters, knew before what you, and with your permission everybody else, knew *after* the success? Of such wiseacres, who know very well that yesterday afternoon it rained, but who cannot tell you whether to take an umbrella to-morrow, the world is full. The moment a man succeeds, it is, 'Of course, how could that be otherwise?' but one

minute before, they would not buy for sixpence the very score that the day after might be worth from £500 to £4,000.

Monsieur Gounod declaimed very violently against the English publisher who 'robbed' him so; but he totally forgot that, although he did not receive for *that* work what undoubtedly its success was worth, it was on account of this very success that he received, as before mentioned, £1,400 from an English publisher for 'Mireille,' and no less than £4,000 from another English publisher for the 'Tribut de Zamora,' which turned out to be not worth the engraving! It happened to Gounod as it happened to Wagner, to Meissonier, and to so many others—that they had to sell cheaply a certain number of masterworks which established their name; but this done, they obtained any amount of money. Why, Delacroix painted his famous lion-hunting in two copies. He received for both of them 1,800 and 2,000 francs—that is, for the first one £80, and for the copy £72; that first copy was sold to a banker in Paris for £100, the second copy went to Algiers. The name of the painter getting more known, as much as

£500 was given for the original work by an intimate friend of mine, at whose house the very banker who first had it, saw it much later, and then wanted to buy it back. The next day a telegram came from Algiers that the copy had been destroyed by fire. Immediately the price of the only existing one rose, and I saw it sold two years after for 36,000 francs (£1,440). Of course Delacroix might in the same way complain that he originally received only £80.

I will now state what I have learned, in a perfectly reliable way, from a lady friend and pupil of Gounod's mother, who taught her music in 1816, while little Charlie, who used to accompany his mother, played in the garden during the lesson. This little Charlie, said by all the musical dictionaries to be born in 1818, was to become the celebrated composer of 'Faust;' and anxious as I was to ascertain his real age, which I knew to be more than those infallible authorities state it to be, I wrote to the living witness—a rather more conclusive authority—and this is part of her answer:

'Charles Gounod must have been born

about 1811 or 1812. I went to Paris in the autumn of 1815, and in the spring and summer following, we children used to play in the large garden of my house at Chaillot, which is now the Allée Marbœuf. I was between eleven and twelve, and often carried little Charles about, who was in petticoats, and could not have been more than four or at the utmost five years old; his brother Urbain — a charming boy, by-the-bye — I should think was then about eight or nine years old.'

He is therefore not sixty-eight, but between seventy-four and seventy-six years old.

The nephew of this lady, a gentleman residing in the south-west of London, had once a discussion with Gounod, whose memory is singularly unreliable as to dates, relating to his age, and he convinced Gounod on the strength of the above-mentioned facts, and so proved to him the details his aunt, who now lives in the south of France, had given him, that Gounod at last admitted all those facts to be accurate. Having been given by Vapereau and Fétis, the year 1818 was copied in all the other dictionaries wrongly, as above stated. Gounod is not yet old

enough to coquet with his age and make himself older; and from what I know of him he will never get beyond the age when people love to make themselves out younger than they are.

Considering the number of operas (serious and comic) he produced, to the tune of no less than fourteen, and considering that only one had a universal success, whereas two comic operas—'Le Médecin malgré lui' and 'Philémon and Baucis'—are full of that original finesse and elegance which are the trade-mark of the house Gounod, but never had any success out of France, it is surely a curious sign of the times that he commanded such immense prices as £4,000 each for the English copyright of his last two oratorios. While he called the 'Redemption,' his last oratorio, *opus vitæ meæ*, he called the extra last one, performed at the Birmingham festival, 'Mors et vita;' after which I am afraid nothing will remain but the terror of Hades to be described. I hear just now that he is going to court inspiration at the Rheims cathedral, to write a symphonic poem: 'Jeanne d'Arc.'

Gounod is very spirituel, both with his pen and his tongue, and is one of the most amusing companions. I mean when he is sober, in the sense of calm self-possession; but when he explodes, which may at any time happen, then *bon soir la compagnie*—you may expect something like the eruption of a volcano; not only will his words flow like boiling lava, but stones will be thrown, and sparks, and cinders, and a veritable cataclysm of speech. Suddenly, however, as I have seen, if a gentleman has the nerve calmly to address him on a subject quite different from the one under discussion, he will reply with perfect quiet, and if by any means interested in the matter skilfully introduced, will warm to his subject, totally forgetting the topic on which, but a minute before, he was so heated and angry.

One of his hobbies is to be pitied—he is always *souffrant;* so he wrote some years ago:

'Mon bon et cher ami,—Quoique je sois bien souffrant et bien fatigué (always) par des misères et des peines de toute sorte et de bien *cruelles*, je ne veux pas laisser sans réponse votre affectueux souvenir. . . . J'ai terminé,

ou à peu près, "le Tribut de Zamora," ouvrage qui va probablement entrer prochainement à la copie et à l'étude à l'Opéra,' etc.

But just as, notwithstanding these thoroughly French *minauderies*, he is an excellent, honourable man, so must it be admitted that notwithstanding the most numerous failures I ever knew a great composer to undergo, the 'Reine de Saba,' the 'Nonne Sanglante,' 'Polyeucte,' 'Tribut de Zamora,' *e tutti quanti*—notwithstanding especially the weakness of his later works, Gounod is, if I may say so, one of the most poetically expressive composers of our century; he has brought forth in his successful operas ('Faust' and 'Mireille') a wealth of beautiful melodies, thrown about with the rich hand recognisable in Meyerbeer's 'Robert le Diable' (more visible there than in many of Meyerbeer's other operas); he has produced harmonies and modulations entirely his own, new and beautiful, with a clearness of nature and simplicity of form, doubly gratifying in an age of musical torture, where a number of musical or rather unmusical shouters warmly advocate only that which is grating on your ears, hurt-

ful to your perception, false and indigestive to your organization. But Gounod, whose undoubted elevation of style in his sacred music results from the deep and serious studies he made in the beginning of his career, has composed a number of minor works of great variety and full of originality, and minor only quantitatively, not by any means in quality. I may mention his numerous songs, the whole collection—I should say, several collections — perfect masterpieces. The superposed melody to the first preludium of Bach's twenty-four preludes and fugues, of which he was the first to invent the idea, was originally written for piano, violin, and harmonium for his friend Lefébure-Wely, the famous organist, who was the best performer on the harmonium I ever heard. This piece had an immense success. Then the words of the Ave Maria were adapted to the melody, and sung by a soprano voice, the sensation which it created being such that, perpetually amplifying it, it was performed once at Baden-Baden, Mme. Miolan-Carvalho singing the soprano part, Vieuxtemps playing the violin, Thalberg the piano, your humble servant

the harmonium, while Berlioz conducted the chorus and orchestra, in which four harps accompanied. I remember, as if it had been yesterday, the tremendous encore, which under the circumstances was inevitable, and to which Vieuxtemps, whom it bothered, would not respond, but grumbled: 'Voilà vingt ans qu'on nous scie le dos avec cela;' while Madame Miolan, turning to me, said: 'The idea of refusing such an encore! I shall certainly fall in with it. Chacun pour soi, le bon Dieu pour tous!' and on she went; and of course we, the humble servants, had to follow suit. But when after this the audience had a mind to make us begin a third time, Vieuxtemps quickly locked up his fiddle and rushed out, running so quickly, that verily I believe he still runs; no, he died since, poor man, in Algiers, sincerely regretted by his numerous friends! . . . . Among what Gounod calls small trifles, is another most graceful and popular song of his, 'La Sérénade,' with harmonium accompaniment. Men and women of all nations have sung it to death.

It will always remain the glory of the then

musical critic of the *Athenæum*, Mr. Chorley, to have criticized the first concert which Gounod gave in London, where he introduced his works to an English audience, in these words: 'As to the four works which Monsieur Charles Gounod produced at St. Martin's Hall, I can only call them the works of an accomplished artist and poet, and foretell for Monsieur Gounod an extraordinary career, for, if he be not a genius, both true and novel, I would have to return to school and rebegin the study of the A B C of criticism.' Where some French critics of great merit found in his recitative 'une vérité d'expression,' in his chorus 'vigueur de rhythme, et une puissance magistrale de style,' and, what nearly everywhere distinguishes him, 'un esprit fin, délicat, analytique,' a Belgian, who used to write much in French musical periodicals, and who shall for the nonce remain nameless, said of his 'Faust': 'No unity in book or score;' and of that unsurpassed duet, the only one that can compare with that model in the 'Huguenots,' 'Laisse-moi contempler ton visage,' and 'Nuit d'amour, ciel radieux,' where the tenderness and delicacy of feeling in the

voice is rivalled only by the most subtle and clever effects in the orchestra—a perfect triumph of melody, harmony, and orchestration—he wrote: The merit of 'la facture du maître' cannot replace inspiration, and moreover, 'Où Gounod cherche la force, il ne trouve que le bruit.' It would be interesting to know what that critic would say of any of the mild effusions of Richard Wagner, who got a whole series of brass instruments manufactured on purpose for his sweet strains; or of Liszt's 'Stanislas,' where people might go mad from the frantic noise, as at Vienna a member of the orchestra last month went mad after the rehearsal of 'Parsifal,' and jumped on the stage to murder the conductor and director, Mr. Jahn, one of the most amiable, quiet gentlemen born. This is the second orchestral member who has become a lunatic, if not through, at any rate immediately after, the rehearsal of 'Parsifal.'

It is well known to all who have had any interest in inquiring into Gounod's doings, from the moment that he gained his Prix de Rome, that for something like five years, if I mistake not, between 1844 and 1849, it is

not exactly known where he was or what he did. He went to Vienna in 1842; a Mass of his was executed in the same year, a Mass *pour voix seules*, in imitation of Palestrina, 'Sappho' was produced in Paris in 1850. The *Gazette musicale* in 1846 published a paragraph to the effect that he had entered orders and 'porte même l'habit ecclésiastique;' but all this is not known to be exact —indeed it is, if anything, rather known to be not exact. A somewhat romantic explanation, most interesting and I may say fascinating, has come to be circulated in a certain coterie, and if I do not relate it, it is because I do not know it to be exactly true, although there would be no harm done to the great musician's reputation if it was so, and if the world knew it.

It remains to consider Gounod as a writer. He has of course the qualifications and disqualifications of his native land, of the 'nation la plus spirituelle du monde,' and at the same time the most vain, I may say. But although he often speaks and usually writes as if he were conscious that every word which falls from his lip or his pen was a pearl, there is in

his case many a real pearl bestowed upon his listeners or readers, and I wish by no means to underrate the value of the man in any direction whatsoever.

His articles on Wagner have the great defect of seeming insincere and overpraising for a reason. Whenever he came to see Princess Pauline Metternich, no superlative expression of admiration was too strong, because the Princess was known to be not only an admirer but a maniac for Wagner's music. There is a certain charm, a look of generosity in taking the part of a much-attacked man; and as Wagner wrote no French operas, and his music was not and is not likely for obvious reasons to be accepted in France without strong opposition, it cost Gounod little to defend Wagner, whose rivalry he had not to fear, and who to his last day posed as a victim of the dictum 'no one is a prophet in his own country,' although he had a regal fortune at his disposal and left his family in possession of some £5,000 a year. I cannot help imagining when I read what Gounod wrote on Beethoven and Mozart—perhaps I am too severe in my views—that

he is fancying what a boon he confers on those great masters by adding his homage to that of the world. He writes in such an affected, exaggerated style about 'Don Giovanni' that one cannot but think it is not his sincere, genuine opinion, and that he only wishes to appear so awfully enthusiastic in order to make people wonder at the generosity of the man who, himself so great, does not hesitate with his illustrious hand to put a laurel crown on the bust of another immortal master.

Besides, they have such a fashion in French newspapers of wasting so many words about very little. Everybody knows that to be blind is a terrible affliction, yet I have always found that blind people seem to be happier than one would think they could be, and probably for two reasons. First, that though they do not see anything that is handsome, neither do they see anything that is ugly, and in their imagination they probably paint to themselves the world much more beautiful than it is; and then they have everybody's sympathy and pity, whereas people are inclined to laugh at a deaf man the moment he

misunderstands what you say to him. This is all very simple and well known. Now see what Gounod says on this point: 'If I were asked for which of two calamities I would decide, being blind or being deaf, I should without hesitation sacrifice my hearing to my eyesight. I know very well that people say a deaf man is more given to melancholy than a blind one; but to me not to see would be the acme of misery, and I would rather commit suicide than be guided by another hand in the streets, in the house, everywhere. A man can write and read music, he need not hear it, and his perception of the idea, the harmony, the melody, will in no way be impaired. Even Beethoven wrote his grandest music when he was deaf!' Now listen to this supercilious, extravagant proposition: 'A composer, while he writes down his ideas, is *just like a deaf man;* he writes it from his mind alone—he need not hear it.' This is tantamount to saying that every novelist who writes a new story is like a dumb man, for he does not read aloud what he writes. A man is not deaf because he hears nothing when there is nothing to be heard. 'But blind-

ness : eternal darkness, loneliness, impenetrable silence !' Why silence ? Can a blind man not listen to all that goes on around him ? Can he not, if he choose to do so, interrupt an accidental silence by a reasonable speech ? Why silence ? 'Be deprived,' he continues, 'of reading, of communication with the whole world. Painting and fine art lost for ever ! The deaf man is in actual contact with the whole world, whereas the blind man depends for his smallest needs upon others ; he can neither walk by himself, nor drive or ride—he is the slave of slaves, the prisoner of prisoners.'

Most assuredly, nobody of his own accord would choose to be blind ; but when there is one of two calamities to be chosen, blindness or deafness, it sounds strange that a musician should rather give up hearing any of his own or of the great masters' creations than seeing what, after all, is so often called an optical illusion.

I don't think a better proof can be given of the unmitigated delight with which Gounod looks in his own glass than the modesty with which he expresses himself in the following

phrase: 'When I was very young I spoke always of myself alone. I condescended after a few years to add Mozart, and to say, "I and Mozart." It so happened, however, that, after studying a little more, I thought I had better say, "Mozart and I." Now what I say is, "Mozart."' It is but too evident that his modesty consists in admiring himself for being so modest as to admire others. He possesses in a very high degree the art of using language in order *not* to express his thought. An instance of this he gave very recently. In answer to a letter from London, asking him to give his opinion whether the English are or are not a musical people, he says: 'An anti-musical nation exists not. Music is an element of human nature. There are individuals who listen to music with indifference, or even with dislike: those I can only call diseased. Would there were hospitals for treating and curing them! There will be some day, perhaps. Before that happy day dawns, humanity has anyhow a load of other fish to fry. I have not time *in extenso* to treat so interesting a subject. So far as I am myself concerned, I can only

congratulate myself when I see how England has received my works; and I know how English people stick to their friendship as well as *to their hatred!*' Why are the words 'to their hatred' underlined? Does he still grumble about his 'Faust'? He surely has no reason to speak of English hatred; and if you take this letter to pieces, you will see the *beau parleur* at once who simply *parle pour rien dire.* What does he mean? Did he answer the question: Are the English musical or not musical? I defy anybody to find an answer to the question in that letter. Is he not very kind to say that his time does not permit of his treating so interesting a subject *in extenso*, as if he had treated it at all? Evidently he does not wish to say yes or no, and he gets over the difficulty by simply getting out of it!

I remember meeting him once in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, arm in arm with Victor Massé—poor man! since dead, in comparative youth. It was just after Gounod's 'Faust' had been given at the Théâtre Lyrique, and, to my amazement, had met with rather doubtful success. There

was the Soldiers' Chorus, the waltz especially, very much applauded, praised, and bought, but what is really grand in the opera people seemed very slow to appreciate ; and so I said to him : 'Is it not curious that people should take so to that Soldiers' Chorus, which, you must really agree with me, is not exactly the most distinguished piece in the opera ?' 'Ah, my dear E.,' he said, 'don't you see, operas are not born like men, head foremost ; operas are born feet foremost (*les pieds les premiers*). The lowest parts are sure to be the first recognised ; but by-and-by the turn of the heart, the head, and brain will come. . . .' And it did come, and relegated the feet, which appeared first, to the background ; and the best parts now shine, in all the glory of superior intelligence, delicacy of feeling, refinement of taste, from one pole of the earth to the other, rendering celebrated the name of Charles Gounod.

The opera, however, is important enough, both by its own value and by the universal recognition it conquered, to deserve a word for itself.

A WORD ON 'FAUST.'

IF the libretto of 'Don Juan' has powerfully helped to render the opera popular, there can be no doubt whatever that Goethe's masterpiece of 'Faust' helped Gounod's music and his opera in general equally strongly. In this opera, just as in 'Don Juan,' it is the supernatural that attracts the masses. It is not the faithful tenderness of Marguerite, it is not the sympathy with her unhappy fate, nor is it pity for the honourable brother so treacherously murdered which excites the interest of the general public. It is the supernatural power of Mephistopheles, who compels Marguerite to love, who triumphs by his devilish tricks over the well-principled innocent girl—it is his invisible interference in the duel-scene, uncovering Valentine's breast for Faust's murderous

weapon. It is because people cannot understand it, that they are attracted like children by anything that is mysterious. In Goethe's 'Faust,' without counting the minor parts, there are four types. The Doctor himself, who imagines that science can unravel the mysteries of creation, and, in his eagerness to know what men cannot learn, overlooks the fact that the created can no more fathom the creator than the painted canvas, however wonderfully finished, can understand the artist who created it. At this weak point the second type, Mephisto, lays hold of him, and carries him away. Marguerite, who forsakes her religious adviser through the influence of the evil one, and Wagner, the self-sufficient mediocrity, the conceited ignoramus, who says to Faust, 'I know very much indeed; but I want to know everything,' make up the literary quartet. In the opera Wagner is omitted, and to the gossiping neighbour, Marta, a more prominent part is granted. Not because there is a special interest attached to her, but because a contralto part is needed in order to fill out the vocal quartet.

Gounod has divided 'Faust' into two parts, as the poet has. The worldly drama is one, the spectral part is the other. But just as in the book the ghostly part on the Blocksberg is the weakest, so is it in the music, so much so that it is usually omitted. The second part of the book—over which much discussion has arisen, between those who will have it that whatever a great man writes must be a masterpiece, and those who could not exactly 'see it'—that second part has in Germany, where one must suppose Goethe to be well understood, long since been condemned as the plaything of a great mind grown old and weak. Boito has tried to put it on the stage with *his* 'Faust,' but the public could never understand the meaning, and I certainly do not care to undertake the explanation of what is well-nigh unintelligible. Gounod has not, like Meyerbeer in the 'Huguenots,' hewn his characters in an inflexible piece of rock, leaving each one throughout the work massive, as he put him on the pedestal at first; Gounod allowed the characters to sing as they think, and gradually as their thoughts change, so changes the expression.

Mephisto's music is sneering from beginning to end, but Faust is now cynical, now sentimental; and Marguerite, innocent and loving in the Garden scene, becomes tragic in the church and dramatic in the prison, whereas in Goethe's poem there is no tragic power in the church scene. She is only a weak girl, who, under the influence of the evil spirit's whisperings, faints away; and her religious power is all that is dramatic about her in the prison, where she refuses under any condition to follow Mephisto, even when her only salvation seems to lie in allowing Faust, with Mephisto's help, to carry her out of the prison to save her from the impending death penalty.

But allowing for this inconsequence, not in keeping with Goethe's 'Faust,' and for which Gounod is not responsible, but Messieurs Barbier et Carré, every recognition is due to the genial work accomplished by Gounod, whose score contains such a number of new ideas, both in melody and orchestration, and such a spirituelle combination of new thoughts and new effects, that its immense popularity in every country where it is performed is

but mere justice. Yet the opera in which Monsieur Carvalho, the director of the Théâtre Lyrique, had such confidence that he at once spent four thousand pounds on the mise en scène (a sum at that time nearly unprecedented, although since then in many instances vastly surpassed), did not at first meet with appreciation on the part of the public, nor even of the press in general; although Mme. Miolan Carvalho, one of the greatest French singers of her time, then in the prime of her artistic powers, sang Marguerite, according to Gounod's own expression, in a manner unapproached. After her the greatest singers of the day, Patti, Lucca, Nilsson, have had their triumphs in the part, and the whole work has been perhaps the greatest success any French composer ever could boast.

I remember how anxious Gounod was to get his opera performed in England, and when I left Paris for London, telling him that I would do all I could with an English publisher to bring the work out here, how he sat by me when I arrived at his house, taking up the orchestral score, and said: 'Maintenant,

causons!' All his hopes glistened in his eyes, and all the eagerness of a young composer to become known au delà de la banlieue! A few years later, after the great success of the opera, which was played here simultaneously in the two Italian opera-houses, how different he became! 'Whether they play my operas or not, what do I care?' he then said.

It is of course easy enough to moralise on the vanity of men, but the success of 'Faust' was one of those unusual theatrical events over which a man may well lose his head. Every country produced it, and in every country, as I have stated, it was an extraordinary success. Often an opera successful in Paris pleases little in Germany, and even less in England; but in this case, Italy, Germany, Russia, England, all Europe and America, united in one ovation for the composer of 'Faust.' Several reasons must be assigned for this result. First and foremost, the number of charming motivos, graceful, warm, tender, in the first acts; the music of the people and that of the military band—full of spirit in the market scene, grand, serious,

dignified in the church; and after you have gone through so much remarkable music in the last act, to crown the work comes the happiest idea, when, to reach a climax, the same motif is sung in three different keys after each other, always half a tone higher, so that to the very last gradation the interest is fully kept up. Apart from the question of melodies, the orchestration is a perfect treasure of spirituelles combinations, wonderfully expressive of the situation and the words, a mine of new harmonies, of excellent contrapuntal work, and of novel effects—so that it becomes a study as interesting as knowledge and esprit can make it. Strange to say, as I related above, the opera did not take at first. It was too new, too good, too well worked. It was not at once appreciated, but though recognition was slow, it was sure to come.

I must again allude to the military march, full of entrain and excellently written, though perhaps the only piece not of a very distinguished character in that opera, in which grace and distinction, the usual qualities of good French music, are pre-eminently found. But, perhaps not *quoique* but *parceque*, that

march first took the public by storm. Gounod's explanation of the phenomenon has been mentioned. He considered it the foot, not the head, of his great work. He therefore perfectly agreed with the author of this notice, that the march was not the piece he should have thought worthiest of attracting public attention. The next piece to conquer the audience was the waltz, a masterpiece sui generis. Then the ballet-music, original, catching, melodious, orchestrated to perfection.

This soon attracted a certain number of people who heard at the same time the love-duet in the garden, a chef d'œuvre to which only the great duet of the 'Huguenots' is superior. By-and-by, Marguerite's 'King of Thule,' in its simple melancholy, then the brilliant 'Air des Bijoux,' with all its elated expression of joy, surprise, and love, conquered the audience. When all that was done, then of course the public understood that they were in presence of a masterpiece of which every particle had a right to be heard. Then the deep and serious church scene found as much recognition as the sneering Mephisto songs. Siebel's 'Le

parlate o fiori,' and Faust's 'Salve dimora,' love-songs both, but in such wonderful keeping, the one with a young student's overflowing heart, the other the warm and tender expression of a ripe man's devotion; each so well written for the voice (of a contralto the first, of a tenor the last), conquered public favour; and although it took years, it may be said that the public was at last educated to the height of an operatic *évènement*, and then Gounod's fame grew mighty. Although 'Faust' is, without any doubt, one of the greatest operatic creations of the century, yet, compared with certain operas of Meyerbeer, it cannot be said that the work is a big statue, *d'une seule fonte*, compact, and, if I may be allowed to say so, logically developed. It is much more a beautiful mosaic, or perhaps a gallery of a number of big and small, serious and graceful pictures, in delicious frames, attractive, enchanting, admirable, but not one great, dramatic mass, like the 'Huguenots,' with one ground idea, and where one principal character, a staunch Protestant, stands inflexible, inexorable, depicted as austere musically as in life, while round him are

grouped sometimes a number of beauties, delicate and graceful, sometimes severe combinations, as grand as anything ever written, and by the side of them the most charming ballet-music. But the chief quality to be found in the 'Huguenots' and not in 'Faust' is, that in the 'Huguenots' all the music is amalgamated into one grand whole, like that church resting on one pillar which Samson is said to have broken, thereby ruining the entire edifice; whereas in 'Faust' all these beauties follow each other, but do not form one immense column—do not possess that Greek unity which puts a work of art before you, with innumerable perfect details, which remain details, and only combine in forming one great artistic whole. This is perhaps the reason why, while nobody will deny thorough admiration to the opera 'Faust,' yet it will never command the same deep respect as the classical work, the dramatic creation of that great master, Wolfgang von Goethe.

MEYERBEER.

IT is perhaps painful to have to put up with privation from childhood, and to begin a hand-to-hand fight with fate when you are barely ready for the severe battle of life. Man is born, that is very simple; but no sooner is he in the world, in which he arrives without his consent, yet with every want, and with no means of satisfying it, than instantly the exacting process of keeping soul and body together begins, and, devoid of everything, he has to begin life on charity. It is the sweet, inexhaustible charity of a mother's heart which at first you depend on. This charity is unlimited, for there is no mother who would not willingly give her all for her child, be she high or low born, from

the lamented Princess Alice down to the poorest woman. Yet, beginning life with privations accustoms men to encounter difficulties later on with a more determined mind, and most of those who are called self-made men, owe to the best school, that of necessity, the success which has crowned their career.

Rare are the men who attain artistic fame without this struggle; and although it is a sign of our times that even the richest have an 'eye to business,' the time is not so far distant when a professional career was looked upon as beneath the position of a gentleman, if not degrading even for the middle classes. See Berlioz, who was to take his medical degree, but preferred to become a great musician, and who was condemned by his *collet monté* parents to find his own resources for bare existence: they would know nothing of the man who disgraced the name of the family by his immortal compositions.

Not such was Meyerbeer's fortune. Nine millions of thalers are a slight aid to making both ends meet, and not only can an art student so provided work on without care for remuneration, but it enables him, when

his work shows real talent, to support the acknowledgment and the success by powerful means, without which the public might never become aware of the existence of his genius.

Jacob (or, as he called himself, Giacomo) Meyer Beer was born of Jewish parents at Berlin on September the 5th, 1791, and he died at Paris on May the 2nd, 1864, consequently in his seventy-third year.* His father's name was Herz Beer; his mother was a highly cultivated, intelligent and refined lady. He showed a musical disposition at an early age. He not only played from memory all he wished to retain, but accompanied with correct harmonies whatever he played, without having made any studies. Unlike other rich people, Meyerbeer's family encouraged his artistic tendencies, and when the child of seven performed in public and secured the approval

* Meyerbeer's birth-year is given now at 1791, now at 1794. The fact is that he *was* born in 1791, as ascertained from the Jewish Register of Initiatory Rites at Berlin. He himself, who had the weakness to make himself younger, named 1794 as the right year; but 1791 is the true date.

of the greatest authorities, his father delighted in the prophecies of a glorious musical future for his phenomenal boy. Meyerbeer studied harmony, counterpoint, and fugue, in the land of science—Germany. He then went to Italy, the land of song, and in the Garden of Europe he learned to sing melodies full of poetry. Next, *pour consacrer sa réputation*, he went to Paris, and in that great city of taste and charms he added to his powerful inspiration, and to a solid foundation of science, that graceful, piquant attractiveness which the stamp of Paris leaves on every produce of that fashionable city, be it commercial or artistic. The tremendous upheaval of the great revolution of 1789 had set all Europe trembling, and the world still quivered from the great convulsion. The immediate result of the violent play of the political passions was a series of military heroes. The next, from the moment that the Restoration had deprived military heroism of its opportunities, was an artistic revolution in literature, poetry, painting, and music. This revolution was known as the romantic school. Victor

Hugo, Horace Vernet, Meyerbeer, Hector Berlioz, were all chiefs of the romantic revolution in art. Meyerbeer's genius, creative and imitative (which latter is very different from mere copying, inasmuch as the first-named appropriates to its own organization what it fully converts *in succum et sanguinem*, and thus re-creates ; whereas the other only reproduces another man's creation), reorganized the orchestra, inventing and stimulating the invention of new instruments (of which Saxe furnished a whole family). After his great successes in Italy, more especially after the 'Crocciato,' he came to Paris and already divined that the time of melody for melody's sake in the superficial Italian style had passed away. Meyerbeer is the very bridge between melody without music into which Italian 'felicità'* had degenerated, and music without melody which is Wagner's creation. Wagner, with his glorious past, his deep science, and his frightfully tedious, inartistic present, represents *the step* from the

* 'Felicità' is the nickname of the cadence which concludes all the great airs of that kind of style, because the four notes usual on such occasions are, so to say, mimicked by the four syllables : fe—li—ci—tà.

sublime to the ridiculous. I shall have occasion to mention the two names again, for the grand position of Meyerbeer enabled him to take under his patronage the young Wagner, and we shall see what he did for his young protégé, and how he was rewarded for it.

When Meyerbeer arrived in Paris and saw the first victories of the young romantic school, he threw himself with alacrity into the new movement. He wrote an opera which, although for eighteen years it made the fortune of the director, the house, and the *marchands de contremarques* in a manner the like of which has never again been seen since 1840, was at first refused point-blank, and was only ultimately received for performance by the management of the Opéra, on condition that Meyerbeer should contribute 30,000 francs (£1,200) towards the *mise en scène*, then an extraordinary sum. This opera, which made not only the fortune of the theatre in which it was first produced and of numerous others, but the fame of its composer, was—I need hardly say it—'Robert le Diable.' Scribe had furnished a libretto

with all possible opportunities for musical and choregraphical display—a camp of chevaliers, a chorus of infernal spirits, a cemetery with all the dead rising from their graves, a splendid ballet, a princess with all her court, a church with a religious service, big parts, *two* tenors, *two* sopranos, etc., etc. Meyerbeer had eagerly accepted the book, and he consented to the contribution which the director imposed upon him, sure as he felt of his success, but he was not slow to impose his own conditions in exchange. Nobody was to sing in his opera but those *he* recommended or allowed to be engaged; and those who know his operas well, can understand that he would require first-rate artists. It was on this occasion that his mania for rehearsing and perpetual changes began, so much so, that Scribe, tired of the composer's continual requirements, told him: 'I will change anything you like in my pieces, but what it will cost you is 20 sous (10d.) per line.' Meyerbeer, although very simple, and even economical in his tastes, did not demur, for no expense was an object to him when his success was concerned. And what

tricks did that liberal penchant of his sometimes play him! Once in Berlin the chorus sang rather tamely in the 'Huguenots.' Meyerbeer, afraid that the great scene—the Bénédiction des Poignards—would lose its effect through want of energy on the part of the chorus, sent for the leader, and asked him what he could do to infuse some spirit into the performance of the chorus.

'Why,' said the learned man, '*similia similibus curantur*—infuse some spirits into the singers.'

'What sum,' said Meyerbeer, 'would it require to make these gentlemen do their best?'

The *Chef des Chœurs* named a sum, and was instantly authorized to give it. Off they went round the corner to spend it. And tell it did! When the grand chorus came on they were full of spirit, and screamed so, that the performance was utterly spoiled. Imagine Meyerbeer's despair!

At the time Meyerbeer gave 'Robert le Diable' to the Opéra, the taste of the public was most frivolous; and the taste of the musicians, notwithstanding the serious turn

which Habeneck gave to the Conservatoire concerts, with Beethoven's Symphonies, was not very much inclined to accept innovations. When the rising of the dead from the grave was accompanied by the bassoons—a most original and most appropriate idea—the whole band burst out laughing. The usual opposition to all new ideas had to be encountered by this young composer; but it is no exaggeration to say that just as Beethoven created the power of the orchestra in the concert-room, so Meyerbeer established it in the theatre, and Berlioz developed it to the highest degree, preserved by his genius from passing on to the fatal step beyond the sublime. This step, which Wagner took in his later works, and particularly his trying to give the orchestra supremacy over the voice, proved the impracticability of pushing a principle to extremes.

Meyerbeer brought out 'Robert' in 1831, and the 'Huguenots,' the greatest dramatic opera ever written, in 1836. It is remarkable how in this opera the *couleur locale* and the Leitmotiv are employed in a manner which Wagner claims to have invented;

whereas he, through using it and abusing it to death, frequently destroys its character, and renders it monotonous. In 1847, Meyerbeer gave the 'Feldlager in Schlesien' for the *début* of Jenny Lind, five pieces of which (I say so advisedly, five pieces and no more) he afterwards put into the 'Étoile du Nord.' In 1849, he produced the 'Prophète,' whose hard and uncompromising fanaticism, too prominent in the book, perhaps influenced the music in that direction; and finally the 'Africaine' was brought out after his death. In considering the immense career this comparatively small series of grand operas constitutes, one cannot but be struck with the richness of ideas, the deep knowledge of orchestration, the varied imagination, the originality of rhythm, the prodigality with which he threw his melodies into the smallest phrases, and the science which his work, particularly his masterly instrumentation, shows. That Meyerbeer was a musical genius cannot be denied; at the same time it is undeniable, too, that he was but mortal, and had his very weak points like many others.

Two of these were his unworthy anxiety

as to what the critics would say, that made him crouch before the smallest scribbler who corresponded with some village paper when it had perhaps three readers and no subscriber. The other was his parsimony in any matter where his immediate success was not concerned. But from this parsimony only he himself had to suffer. He could be, and was, generous to others, but he refused himself every enjoyment. Even consideration for his health did not outweigh his economical principles, although when success came he lavishly threw away any amount of money. I will give some facts in support of this. Meyerbeer was once in a Berlin Keller where they sell those small tempting delicacies which assist the consumption of wine. Having had a little Brödchen (a small anchovy sandwich), and still feeling a little appetite, he approached the barmaid—I guarantee the fact, because I heard it—and asked: 'Could he have a quarter Brödchen?' (Ein Viertels Brödchen). When the barmaid said they did not sell quarters, he went off disappointed, walked up and down for full two or three minutes, and having then taken a vio-

lent resolution, he again addressed the barmaid, inquiring could he have half a one? Again she refused, mentioning that the rule of the house was never to sell less than a whole sandwich. Meyerbeer reflected, walked up and down several times, and then went away without taking another one, whole or part. Here in London, when he was suffering from the climate, and from the water which he could not digest, I advised him to drink good claret, such as he used to have in Paris, and his answer was: 'Y pensez-vous? Do you know what claret costs in this country? I could not get a bottle under three or four shillings!' And he did *not* have it! On the other hand, the expenses which he willingly incurred for his operas are well known. Even at the height of his fame—when, after having produced the number of brilliant grand operas before mentioned, he took it into his head to write for the Opéra Comique 'L'Étoile du Nord,' 'Dinorah,' and so on—he contracted to pay the maximum of the receipts to the manager for sixty nights; that is to say, he guaranteed 6,000 francs a night (then the maximum), whether the sale of tickets

brought as much or not. One opera brought that sum only thirteen nights, and for forty-seven nights he had to fill up the gap in the treasurer's book. Then he increased the success by all possible financial means, such as a *mise en scène* of the most extraordinary kind, press articles, claque, and so on.

When he produced the 'Huguenots' and was afraid the opera would not be performed so often as he desired, on account of the tenor feeling, or pretending to feel, fatigue, Meyerbeer offered Duprez to bet him his author's rights for twenty performances that the opera would not reach eighty performances. As it had just been given sixty times, Duprez, to win his bet, pushed it on, and instead of refusing, demanded its being continually on the bills until he had reached the culminating point of his bet, the eightieth performance.

When Meyerbeer selected Roger for 'Le Prophète,' because Duprez could no longer sing, Meyerbeer gave Raoul in the 'Huguenots' to Roger too. Yet, suddenly, strange to say, Gueymard, by no means the equal, either as a singer or actor, of Roger, though the happy possessor of a beautiful voice, obtained

from Meyerbeer the right to sing Raoul, in violation of Roger's asserted rights. Roger was married. His wife was madly devoted to him, and she filled Paris with her wailing and her tears over the misfortune that had befallen her husband, that a young uneducated singer should be preferred to him who had earned so much fame in that part.

Her cries were so incessant, and her clamour for redress was so urgent, that at last the commotion reached me too, and she came to ask my intercession, imploring me to represent to Meyerbeer how much his opera, his *chef-d'œuvre*, suffered at the hands of such an incompetent performer, and to beg that the part should be restored to its legitimate impersonator. I was then very young and very inexperienced, and too ready to act as the *preux chevalier* of any oppressed victim, so I made it my business to represent to Meyerbeer in vivid colours all the injustice he did to Roger and especially to himself. But when Meyerbeer answered me in his obliging diplomatic tone: 'Oh, certainly, you are perfectly right, and I am sincerely obliged to you for the interest you take in the performance of my

humble efforts. I am, moreover, quite of your opinion—Roger is vastly superior to Gueymard, but you don't think Gueymard is decidedly bad, do you? Of course he is not so good as Roger, but do you think he is really very inferior?' I saw at once that Meyerbeer, for some reason best known to himself, had made up his mind to leave the part in Gueymard's hands.

I went to Adolphe Adam, who then was not only a composer of great renown, but a musical critic who had just written the following lines: 'Mais pourquoi Monsieur Meyerbeer est-il si modeste? He seems totally to distrust his own capabilities, to have no confidence, he the only man on earth, in his own genius. He is always anxious to have the greatest singers, the most unheard-of scenic effects, and so on; why not leave the success entirely to his work? Why is he so modest?' Of course the reader is not the dupe of this humble query, which was nothing but a bitter sarcasm. Well, then, to Adam I went, and asked him what he thought of the affair, and he told me: 'Roger est un grand artiste, et l'autre est un savetier (Roger is a great

artist, and the other (Gueymard) is a cobbler). Meyerbeer, you may be sure, knows this well, and better than you and I. The reason why, nevertheless, he retains Gueymard in the "Huguenots," is, that should Gueymard not sing Raoul, he would have to be occupied somehow, and they would give him the part of Arnold in "William Tell" to sing, which would bring Rossini at least once a week on the bills, and this rivalry is what Meyerbeer wishes to prevent, to the extent even of sacrificing his rôle.' I confess I thought this very small of so great a man, and I know not, though I had never heard Adam say what was untrue, whether this was Meyerbeer's real reason, or how far the successes of that contemporaneous composer may have lent a colour to Adam's judgment.

His anxiety to secure good criticisms cost Meyerbeer a great sum, and one of his publishers told me that of the millions of francs that Meyerbeer's operas brought, he himself had never had as much as 150,000 francs (£6,000). I can only understand this strange result by the fact of his lavishing right and left large sums for all sorts of

extraordinary contrivances, by his vast outlay to secure the greatest singers, and to pay every journalist he could buy.

As to singers, of course the chief difficulty with his operas always was, that most of his parts, if not all, are written for exceptional voices. Two big sopranos, two tenors, and an exceptional bass are required for 'Robert;' and the same, with a goodly number of excellent baritones, in the 'Huguenots,' etc.

There was for many years a journalist in Paris who made no secret of his being paid for his articles, and who dealt very hardly with those who refused to pay; and he wrote against such artists as Duprez and Alboni for no other reason than that they would not pay him, until Duprez brought a suit against him for libel. The journalist swore he would put the most prominent feature of Madame Alboni into his feuilleton if she did not pay him, and this is what he wrote: 'Madame Alboni is an immense artist' (she always was, even at the age of seventeen, very fat), 'nobody can deny it. But how is it that she does not seem to know that she must avoid disguising herself in man's costume, unless she really

means to render herself ridiculous? When she appeared as Maffio Orsini, every seam of her dress cracked, the belt had given in its resignation, and the cloak, too short, covered but the smaller half of this strange spectacle. (Le manteau trop court, ne couvrait que la moitié de cet étrange spectacle.)'

Once this critic told me, and, of course, told everybody, that Meyerbeer owed him 3,000 francs. 'And pray, what for?' I asked, suspecting that he alluded to a debt for his articles, and curious to see whether he would have the cynicism frankly to admit it. 'Oh!' he said quite unconcernedly, 'everybody seems to think he gave me 10,000 francs' (£400) 'for my feuilleton on his "Étoile du Nord," but he gave me only 7,000, so he evidently owes me 3,000!'

A curious incident happened once when the same critic (Fiorentino) was out of town for a week, and begged me to go and correct his proofs at the *Moniteur* (which appeared on Sunday), and at the *Constitutionnel* (which appeared on Monday). He wrote under the assumed name of De Rovray for the *Moniteur*, whereas he signed his own name in the

Constitutionnel. When I arrived at the *Moniteur* office I found a letter for him in these terms: 'Mons. de Rovray.—Dear Sir,—I am going to make my *début* in a week. I care for no paper except the *Moniteur*, because I, as well as my friends, know you to be the only critic who really understands music, and therefore beg to enclose,' etc. I put the letter in my pocket, corrected the proof, and next day went to the *Constitutionnel* office, where I found several letters for Fiorentino. One of them ran thus: 'Signor Paolo Fiorentino.—Dear Sir,—I am going to make my *début* in a week. I care for no paper except the *Constitutionnel*, because I, as well as my friends, know you to be the only critic who really understands music, and therefore beg to enclose,' etc. The writer, of course, little dreamed that writing to two papers and two critics, he was addressing the same person, who was thereby enabled to appreciate at its full value the compliment which the writer paid to each critic 'exclusively.'

It is remarkable that a man of such genius as a composer combining the melodic charm of

Italy, the science of Germany, and the piquant grace of France—a man whose energy and musical knowledge were demonstrated beyond all doubt—should have been so bad a conductor, even of his own works. He used to rave about Sir Michael Costa. He said: 'Voilà le premier chef d'orchestre du monde.' And this, not only because Sir Michael when rehearsing his operas at Covent Garden, did in five rehearsals what in Paris under Meyerbeer had taken months and months to study, but because on one occasion Meyerbeer could not move the orchestra at his will, and Sir Michael Costa told him, 'C'est votre faute,' and showed him that by beating two with the left hand while he was beating four with the right hand, a certain passage would go all right; then Meyerbeer turned round and said: 'You *are* the first conductor in the world!'

Meyerbeer was as kind-hearted and obliging as possible, and many a proof of it did he give to people who repaid him in very different coin.

Meyerbeer was very fidgety, and never thought he could confide in his own merit. So long as an opera was in rehearsal, he

fidgeted about all sorts of contrivances to ensure its success—he thought nothing of the expense of a rising sun, skaters on the stage, etc., so long as the effect was new and likely to draw. His instrumentation, the most genial ever heard, was all written in red ink and in black ink. The one in red ink was the effective one, the one in black was the more musician-like, and he gave a trial to both. These little weaknesses did not prevent him from being recognised as one of the most remarkable innovators of the century, whose ideas, style, conception, melodies, combinations were all his own, all original, all admirable.

He was perpetually hunting for grand voices, and when he succeeded, he trained them and brought them up to sing his operas, paying them for years. He once heard of the *début* of a very young girl, with a full, fresh voice, at Prague. He instantly left Vienna, where he happened to be staying, in quest of the new star. He heard her, took her at once to Berlin, made her sing his operas day after day, and she certainly was the best Africaine I ever saw. This was Pauline Lucca.

When speaking of Rossini I shall have an opportunity of saying how untrue the report was that Rossini saw Meyerbeer's fame with jealousy. Rossini was much too grand for such petty feelings, indeed he had a great regard for Meyerbeer; and speaking of Verdi and Meyerbeer, I said to him once: 'You see, Maestro, Verdi's melodies want dress and jewellery, whereas yours are like handsome young women—they are charming even in their morning dress.' 'But,' said Rossini, 'Meyerbeer's melodies can do without even the morning-dress, so well formed are they by nature. You call me the reformer of the Italian opera? Meyerbeer is the reformer of the world's opera—with all his fame he is not yet appreciated at his full value.' These were his very words, and they struck me so much, spoken by one great composer of another, that I remember, as if it were to-day, the very spot in the Rue de Rivoli, as we walked along the Tuileries, in which he uttered this generous criticism.

Rossini and Meyerbeer never wore a beard or a moustache, but were clean shaven like priests. I once asked Meyerbeer, who was much

more fond of the sex which was not his, than you would suppose of so serious a scholar, whether he had never worn a moustache —the thing which in France the ladies seemed to value so much. But he said that he was not of a certain Pope's way of thinking, and that, like the English people, he thought a clean shaven face the best. If he could now see English beards! Perhaps you do not exactly understand what he alluded to, when he said he did not think so much of a beard as a certain Pope did. The story is this: A King of Spain sent an Ambassador to Rome, a young man of high extraction, with a special mission. The Pope, informed that an envoy of the King of Spain demanded an audience, imagined that he would receive an aged Minister covered with stars, and wearing venerable white hair. Instead of which, in walked with light elastic steps quite a young dandy. Haughty and irritable, the Pope looked at him, and at last said: 'Are all the old diplomatists in Spain dead, that the King sends us a young boy without even a beard?' ('un jeune homme imberbe.') 'Holy Father,' said the indignant

Spaniard, 'if the King my master had thought that honour consists in a beard, he would have sent you a goat and not a noble grandee like myself.'

Nothing like asserting one's own rights. Often does it happen in life that a man is underrated, because he is too modest to push himself forward. When a man has attained to very high fame, and is about to reap the fruit of long and persevering study, people are but too much inclined to overlook a whole life of work and services rendered, and seem amazed at the result. Yet the simplest solutions are not always the easiest arrived at, and it takes sometimes a very acute mind to tell you what, *after* you heard it, you think everybody might have told you before. It is the old story of the egg of Columbus.

People usually grumble at great fees. So have I often heard people express surprise that Madame Patti should be paid five hundred guineas for singing two or three airs. But, in the first place, the announcement of her name draws more than the money she receives, otherwise nobody would give it to her; and then it is not the present

exertion, but the fame acquired by a whole life of patient work, which is paid for. When you go to a great physician and he looks at you, and his genius and his long practice enable him instantly to make a correct diagnosis, to put his finger exactly on the cause of your suffering, it is not the two minutes' trouble of writing the prescription which you pay for, but the forty years' practice and the keen observation which enable him to do so.

It happened once to myself that a lady of rather high position asked me to play on those very popular terms—for nothing. Of course I declined the honour.

'But it costs you nothing to sit down for a few minutes,' said the lady, 'and you would do so much good and give so much pleasure.'

'Is that so, my lady?' I said. 'In that case, I will send my instrument and chair, and your ladyship can sit down for a few minutes and do all that good.'

'Oh, but I,' said the lady, 'play so indifferently, and moreover I have not a name to draw an audience.'

'And if I, as you are kind enough to say,

have the talent which others have not, and I have worked twenty-five years to make myself a name which might have a little prestige for an audience, is it not fair that I should have at last some reward for so much trouble ?'

I therefore think if a man is somebody, he ought to know it. 'Nur Lumpe sind bescheiden,' says Goethe. ('Only nobodies are modest.')

Meyerbeer was very humble, and I cannot say that I thought his exaggerated modesty very dignified. It excited doubt whether his was real modesty. A man of his importance, of his numerous, well-deserved successes—the man who transformed opera as he did, who had written the grandest dramatic effects composed in this century, admired in the old and the new world—could afford to hold his head high; and without being arrogant and conceited, there was no need for his crouching down before other celebrities, even before men so great as Rossini, whom he treated as 'Jupiter' in a letter written the day after the performance of his 'Petite Messe solennelle,' at Count Pillet-Will's. But in all this there

was not only the admiration which he had for Rossini's genius, but also some artfulness in bowing down before the older man, because thereby he appeared the younger one. And upon his age he was very touchy. He told me more than once: 'I can only congratulate myself on the great generosity of the journalists *à mon égard*, for they treat my age most liberally, much more so indeed than I deserve.'

He was very well known in Paris, and it gave him particular pleasure when common people stopped in the street and exclaimed in his hearing: 'Voilà Monsieur Meyerbeer qui passe!' But if this is excusable and intelligible, less so were his raptures when he heard his melodies most shamefully ill-treated on barrel-organs and by street bands. I told him once as we walked on the boulevard while, in the Rue de la Michodière, a street organ horribly mutilated a motif from the 'Étoile du Nord': 'Oh, let us pass quickly, I cannot bear this horror.' 'Really?' he asked. 'I am pleased to see the very people (*la vraie populace*) so desirous of hearing my melodies.' I must say, however,

that two other great French composers, Auber and Halévy, defended the street organs too, and very likely from the same reason. Vanitas vanitatum!

It may seem astonishing that so great a composer, who should naturally have been run after by all the managers, condescended to pay the *mise en scène*, and to sign such contracts as he did. But not only did he thus acquire the right to dictate to the manager the sole conditions under which his operas were to be given, the engagements of great artists that were to be made, and so on; but he changed from that time the positions of authors and composers, these now giving the law to managers.

A conversation which I once had with Monsieur Roqueplan, then the manager of the Grand Opéra, will, I fancy, illustrate the position of affairs.

A lady hailing from the same city as I did, came to Paris with her daughter, an accomplished and most talented ballet-dancer, and particularly eager for Parisian reputation. Of course she wished the girl to dance at the Grand Opéra, and asked me what could

be done to get her wish gratified. I told her I would go and ask Roqueplan, and report what he had to say on the subject.

And I did ask him, but in view of possible business he most coolly put to me the following questions :

'Is the girl really an accomplished dancer ?'

'Yes.'

'Is she very well made ?'

'A model for a sculptor.'

'Well, and who is going to pay her salary ?'

'Her salary ?' I asked.

'That is what I said,' replied Roqueplan.

'But I suppose you, the manager,' said I.

'*I ? I ?*' he repeated in the utmost amazement. 'How should I have to do that ? She must have a friend who pays her salary regularly, and I must have a guarantee for that, or I cannot engage her. The same friend, or, for all I care, another one, must pay for her bouquets and costumes ; and then I must know who pays the claque for her. She must be recalled and encored or she will never make a name. Are you so green,'

he added, probably because he saw my blank astonishment, 'as to believe that I pay a single dancer? You go first and ascertain who will pay all that, and bring me the names; and if they are sufficient guarantee, I may engage her after one rehearsal on the stage. But do not forget to settle with the *Chef de Claque*, that is one of the important conditions.'

The *Chef de Claque* is the commander of a well-distributed army, placed in single file all over the house, but obeying a certain leader, laughing, singing, applauding, as the case might be, and as the supposed effect might require. I remember having been present at the general rehearsal of Meyerbeer's 'Étoile du Nord,' when Hermann Léon played Gritzenko, the Russian grenadier. The claque sat in the pit, and they too rehearsed the 'points,' that is to say, where it was requisite to *supporter la pièce ou l'acteur*. When Léon said: 'They allow us no moustache except such a very small one,' the whole claque burst out laughing, and I could not possibly make out where the fun came in, Hermann Léon having

no moustache at all. But at the first performance I understood what it was. Then, in full costume, Hermann Léon wore a moustache very nearly a yard long, and of course when he said: 'They allow us only such a very small moustache,' these words provoked public hilarity, guided and supported by the claque. Having undertaken to arrange the affair in question, I went to the *Chef de Claque* to hear his terms. He handed me a printed list of what he could furnish, and the cost thereof. I give the translation as follows: 'One recall, £6; for 20 nights, paid in advance, £80. A recall *frénétique*, £8; per 20 nights, in advance, £100. Sighs, 10 shillings per night—I would not mind adding an occasional sob for a good tragic or melodramatic customer. Bouquets, from 20 to 200 shillings. *Hissing a rival*, from £10 to £24 *selon le risque*.' These, he said, are the trifles (*les petites misères*); of course, if there was anything to be made by it, demonstrations, ovations, unharnessing the horses, serenading before the windows, and so on—the big affairs, in fact—then of course the mere service of the

house would be provided for a few thousand francs per annum.

Meyerbeer was a very prominent man. As such he could depend upon being belittled by those who, jealous of his great name, tried to injure his reputation. Generally speaking, what a man really is, is often in strange contrast to what he is reputed to be, and you cannot always reconcile the deed with the reputation of the doer. See this instance. At an evening party to which Voltaire was invited, a touching story was told of a poor woman left in distressing circumstances. Then and there a subscription was opened, when a gentleman, instead of putting his name down, proposed to throw a gold piece in his own hat, and then to go round the room to collect what money any of the guests would give. Voltaire sat by the side of a very avaricious man, reputed to stick to every penny like glue. When the gentleman presented his hat, the miser threw some coin into it ; but, as fate would have it, the holder of the hat did not see the contribution, and therefore stood waiting. At last, getting rather impatient — Frenchmen sometimes

do get impatient — he said: 'Monsieur, j'attends!'

'But,' said the miser, 'I have already given.'

'You have!' said the other. 'I do not doubt it, but I have not seen it.'

'Monsieur Voltaire,' said the miser, 'I'm sure, has seen it.'

'I,' said Voltaire, '*have* seen it, but I doubt it.'

This shows that reputation may invalidate evidence. But although a man may get a bad reputation without, perhaps, altogether deserving it, it is a very rare event for a man to get a great reputation without having fully earned it.

The great fame of Meyerbeer was gained by his inspiration, his originality, his power, his deep and great knowledge acquired through hard, persevering, early study. His was a gifted organization strengthened by science. The desire to distinguish himself brought him to his high position, his too eager desire to be acknowledged by others very nearly forfeited it. His anxiety to support his success by legitimate or illegitimate

means, his too visible struggle for effect, his humble attitude towards anyone who could advertise, and his fear of anyone who could injure—be it ever so slightly—his reputation, were the weak points of this otherwise great man.

In private life he was not only a dutiful son, adoring his mother, but, with that veneration for the family life which so honourably distinguishes the Jews, he was a model of a husband and a father. I happened to sit by the side of his daughter at a rehearsal of the 'Africaine' at the Grand Opéra—which took place after his death, because so long as he lived he could never make up his mind anent the choice of a singer for the title rôle—and when the great *unison entr'acte* was encored with an outburst of applause, the genuineness of which admitted of no doubt, she turned to me in such delight, that it was clearly to be seen that she would have sacrificed a year of her life could she have carried the news of this success to her father who was no more.

Meyerbeer's skull was carefully examined by one of the greatest Paris physicians, who

assured me that he had rarely seen so determined a will, so pronounced a bump of persistent labour. At Napoleon I.'s post-mortem examination it was found that the head which had imposed its will on all Europe contained fifty-two ounces and a half of brain, a rather unusual quantity. When Jim Fisk died in New York, shot by a rival, a Mr. Stokes, it was found that he, an excessively intelligent and determined man, who from driving a hackney-coach had made himself, in less than fifteen years, the dictator of the Stock Exchange, a powerful and wealthy railway proprietor, in fact a financial magnate—had a brain of exactly the same weight, fifty-two ounces and a half. But wait. An idiot, whose brain, after his death, was weighed in London, at the College of Physicians, possessed fifty-three ounces! Which proves that it is not quantity alone, but quality which makes all the difference.

So much for physical proof of genius. The proofs which Meyerbeer gave of his superiority are happily beyond dispute, and conclusive for everyone who has a soul for music, and taste for an elevated work of art.

I cannot conclude this short notice without mentioning that Meyerbeer never forgot a service rendered, however small, and although he was economical whenever he could be so, it was only at the cost of his own comfort; he had an open hand for poor musicians—remember all he did to help Wagner in Paris—and many are the proofs of his giving not only advice, introductions, and the aid of his powerful influence, but that his bankers had instructions to make solid contributions towards the maintenance of poor widows or orphans, in one instance even of a whole family for years.

Meyerbeer had not only a great mind, but a great heart!

ROBERT SCHUMANN.

PEOPLE see life differently; thus a gentleman travels with a servant who carries his carpet-bag. One man sees life, like the gentleman, with open eyes impressed by poetic nature, by remarkable works of art, by distinguished women, etc.; another sees like the servant, only what serves his own purpose, or what is good to eat. Again, there are travellers who go through life like their own carpet-bags, from one station to another, without perceiving or remarking anything, until the last station comes, and the journey is at an end, and they are none the wiser for all their travelling.

Schumann saw life musically. Whatever happened to impress him took the form of

music. Thoroughly to enter into what he wrote, it would almost be necessary to feel and think as he thought and felt at the moment of creation, and since his was an essentially sensitive and excitable, not to say eccentric nature, many points of his works remain obscure to those who listen to the music for listening's sake, and wish to be only physically impressed by it—that is to say, to have certain sensations evoked by the ear—instead of reflecting on their impressions, and entering heart and soul, as it were, into the music in order to divine what its composer may have felt. Schumann loved his art sincerely, and his eagerness to distinguish himself and do something above the common, did not spring from the ordinary motive of vain ambitious people, eager before all to be noticed. He wished to do some distinguished feat for his art, as the knights of the Middle Ages did for the lady whose scarf they wore, and he wished to set his foot on Philistines, and upon that common curse of art—mediocrity.

Schumann's father whilst a youth felt an adoration for the English authors Young and

Milton, and so soon as he was a well-established bookseller he showed his enthusiasm for Scott and Byron by publishing German editions of their works — 'Childe Harold' and 'Beppo' being translated by himself. His son Robert's imperious nature showed early. Whenever as a child he played at soldiers he insisted on being commander. Without any knowledge of thorough-bass he began composing when seven years old. He then photographed on the piano the characters of his playmates so strikingly, that they burst out laughing when he 'took off' one of his colleagues, which is a proof that the intended portrait was good. Like Wagner, as a boy he began writing terrible tragedies. It is said of Wagner, that having killed some twenty people in his drama, he was obliged to make the dead reappear as ghosts, in order to have somebody left to talk on the stage. So Schumann wrote terrific Raüberkomödien (brigand dramas). He soon, however, gave up his sanguinary creations for the study of music, impelled thereunto by a concert given in 1819 at Carlsbad by Moscheles. Schumann was then

nine years old. Such was the impression the great virtuoso's style made upon him, that he kept a concert programme on which Moscheles' hand had rested, as a relic. His *début* as conductor he made with an overture by Righini, which was by mistake sent to his father's bookshop. There Robert found the orchestral parts and laid them before several boys, whom he had brought together as a small orchestra, his father patronizingly contributing new music-desks for the occasion.

When only twelve or thirteen years old he composed the 150th Psalm, sung by the same boys who constituted his choir and his orchestra. He was then already able to play Moscheles' 'Alexander Variations,' the great stumbling-block of that time. His evident musical capacity did not find proper scope, however, till ten years later, when, after many struggles, he received permission to leave the study of the law, for which he had been sent to Heidelberg. 'I am in wonderfully high spirits to-day,' he writes from there to his friend Rose, 'simply because I have no money, and it is a good old fashion to be more jolly when one is a beggar than when

one is wealthy; it is, however, frightful to think that you will have to pay eightpence (the postage) to learn as much.' He read Jean Paul with a sort of frenzy; it has been frequently remarked in biographies of Schumann that such an eccentric poet was just the author for eccentric Schumann. Those who say so do not know Jean Paul's work well. The great objection, the only one perhaps that can be made to this greatest poet of a great nation—a poet, if ever there was one, though he wrote no verses—may be, that his knowledge was so vast, so deep, that he could not for one moment fancy other people were not up to the same mark of reading as himself; and then he so perpetually worked his scientific quotations into nearly every line he wrote, that it became excessively difficult reading for those who had not his extraordinary amount of instruction. Schumann was overwrought in consequence of the strain thus put upon his nervous system. He was not the man for the cold, calm logic required for a law-student; but the wishes of his family and of his guardian, and the pressure of necessity, had made him continue, *quand*

même, a study eminently distasteful to his artistic temperament.

He occasionally quizzed his own handwriting, saying that poets and pianists usually write such a 'dog's paw.' I have known two men, Carlyle and Jules Janin, neither of whom was poet or pianist; but if patience exerted in this valley of tears is to be rewarded, as I firmly hope it will be in a better world, I would not take a small cheque for the sum of happiness which I ought to enjoy for my perseverance in deciphering their hieroglyphics. Schumann's writing bore the stamp of his eccentricity, and it was just his way of conceiving Jean Paul, not Jean Paul's work itself, that was eccentric. He threw himself with equal ardour into Schubert's compositions, and surely from Schubert he learned no eccentricity. Concerning his law studies, he himself once jocosely remarked: 'I went to the door of Jurisprudence, and listened for a while, but then I turned round and made off.' He took an interest in that science only when it was not, as he said, 'so cold and dry.' He particularly appreciated Professor Thibaut's statement that the law 'very justly

recognised the majority of a girl (at eighteen) before that of a man (at twenty-four, as the law requires in Germany), because a boy at eighteen is awkward and unreliable, whereas a girl at eighteen is quite self-dependent,' and, as the Professor with his truly German view added, quite capable of 'taking her place in the drawing-room with her knitting work.' Writing from Italy, Schumann is enchanted with the beauty of nature, and expresses himself thus about an English beauty whom he met there: 'That she is in love with me I have reason to believe, but not with me so much, I think, as with my artistic accomplishments; for all English girls love with the head, not, like the Italians, with the heart. An English girl would not give a jot for a man because he is handsome.' We must leave the responsibility of this observation with Schumann. He very amusingly says of the Germans that 'they combine both tastes,' and 'that a German girl would love a cavalier, or a singer, or a rich man, or anyone who would quickly marry her!'

Like many other composers in their younger days, he was in perpetual want of money, and

most ingenious were his devices to get it. That, however, usually happens with those whom necessity, the best teacher in life, inspires, and I feel confident that more genius is developed by a man who wants five pounds and has nothing, than by a big financier who negotiates a loan for a king. So he wrote to his guardian, when he had made up his mind to go to Florence, 'I *must* see Italy, and I hope you will not refuse to let me have the money for the journey. Not that I could not borrow money here, of course at something like ten or twelve per cent., but I would not do that unless I received no money from home.' Naturally the guardian, anxious lest he should make the first step in a career ornamented with usurers, sent what he wanted. Alluding to the frequent occurrence of the vowel A, he calls the Italian language a long chord in A minor. His poetical and excitable nature made him a great admirer of the weaker sex, not to mention his intention of marrying several young ladies ere he fortunately came across that genial and worthy companion of his life, Clara Wieck. His first work was dedicated to the 'Countess Pauline

d'Abegg,' who was no Countess at all, only a very pretty girl whose name furnished him with a cunning device because it was composed of the notes A, B, E, G, which he used just as Bach made a fugue on the letters composing his name. Again and again he had to confide 'schreckliche Dinge' (terrible news) to his guardian, the sum-total of which was always: money. 'Fancy!' he exclaims in great despair; 'the tailor's bill alone swallowed up a capital of £14, a big factor in a student's life.'

But there came a solace amidst his financial troubles; not money earned, to be sure, but a great treat: he heard Paganini—the first virtuoso of this century, whom one class of violinists called the greatest wonder of the age, while others tried to counteract irresistible admiration by calling him 'charlatan.' There is no man so great but those who glory in refusing their share of tribute to genius, will take refuge in calling him charlatan or madman. A madman is a man who does not do things as anybody else does them, and a genius is a man who does things better, more grandly, or, at all events, differently from any-

body else. There is so very narrow a border between the two, that it cannot always be accurately defined where one ends and the other begins. As to the charlatan, seeing the immense glory and fortune which Paganini enjoyed, it would certainly have been worth his detractors' while to imitate what he did, as they said they could—for his charlatanism, said they, could be easily imitated. Yes, but there it is: Do it if you can, and then we shall see whether it depends only on your will. Berlioz's value as a composer was absolutely undreamt of in France, when he gave his 'Symphonie Fantastique;' and when, as I have related, Paganini sought him out, knelt down before him, and sent him a cheque for 20,000 francs, people shrugged their shoulders. Perhaps that is all madness; but there is more sublime method in this madness than in the shoulder-shrugging mediocrity who sums up judgment with the word 'Humbug.' A man who could so revolutionize all grades of society, artist or amateur, as Paganini did, must have been able to do what is only given to genius, viz., to move with an irresistible, superior power

all those who had a soul to listen. Anyway, it was his performance which determined Schumann to leave prose for poetry, law for music; and although encountering the same resistance from his family which Berlioz met with when he wanted to sacrifice medicine to music, Schumann became a composer. He had to begin at the beginning—thorough-bass and counterpoint. His master, Dorn, found him once deeply engaged in dry counterpoint, supported by dry champagne. The master generously shared with his pupil both dry studies.

Perhaps I may be pardoned for informing those readers whose work in life has nothing in common with composition, that there are very different ways of committing musical thought to paper. Amateurs who do not know how to write music may seek the notes on the keyboard, and then get a musician to note down their ideas. I need not say that this is a very primitive way indeed, nearly tantamount to an illiterate man thinking out a story and then having to appeal to some one who knows how to write to commit it to paper for him. But there are also

musicians who know how to write, but are bound to play to themselves what they mean to orchestrate, and, as it were, to clothe the skeleton with various instruments. The true way in which an orchestral composition should be written down is to score it, *i.e.*, write the part of each instrument at once, and in ordinary sequence, the instruments under each other, until the whole score is ready. This of course implies the faculty of hearing each instrument and the combination of all in your mind's ear. Schumann could not do that at first, and some of his early works betray clear indications that he began his studies too late. About his 'transcribing' 'Paganini's Caprices' (six, I believe), I beg to say a word, because he has been blamed for making the piano imitate effects written for an instrument so different in effect and treatment. Although the objection is not quite unreasonable, it must be borne in mind that he did this with a view of testifying his warm appreciation of so great a performer, and this must always be an extenuating circumstance. But, as a rule, I can see no reason why such transcription should be

made between two instruments, each of which has a whole library of its own. I am, in fact, quite opposed to this system of transferring in any sense, and I hold the same opinion with regard to translations. It cannot be supposed that anyone will find more appropriate expressions for an author's thoughts than the author did, in his own language; how much more difficult must this be in another language! In every civilized language there is a larger literature than any man can well read during a lifetime. Those who do not find even this sufficient, may be advised to learn the language of the author whose acquaintance they wish to make. No author has ever been better translated than Shakespeare into German, because it was not some little scribe who just knew the two languages and undertook the work, but two of the greatest men in Germany, Schlegel and Voss; and yet what is the translation, excellent as it is, compared with the original? It is easy to understand that people may translate a novel where all the interest of the reader is concentrated in the facts, or in this question: In the end are they married or not? But in the case of such

serious works as Racine's 'Phèdre,' translated into German by no less a man than Schiller, or Heine's 'Buch der Lieder,' translated into English by several very talented German scholars—those who compare the originals with the translations will at once admit that there can be no comparison between the two. Therefore, condemning translations on principle, I naturally think transcriptions of the kind before-named a mistake. The long preface which Schumann thought necessary to write, shows of itself that he felt some misgiving about his claim to the approbation he courted.

It is perhaps the only work from his pen which, to the best of my knowledge, never reached the concert platform. He who afterwards became so remarkable a critic, was easily touched by a sharp word, and he was considerably cooled down in his artistic enthusiasm when he sent a manuscript to a publisher (Hoffmann), with the remark that he had written for the appreciation of the critics and the artists, without taking heed of the opinion that might be formed by the public; to which the practical publisher replied, 'I

fail to see the strength of your logic. I am a man of business, and care much more for what the public like and buy, than for what pleases the critics.' The Abbé Liszt, however, thought Schumann perfectly right, because, he said, 'an artist who deserves the name, ought always to consider it preferable to displease the public rather than to humble himself before its whims.' The only misfortune here is the difference between theory and practice. It is a noble aim to be working for the satisfaction of your conscience only; but then you must be prepared to abide by the consequences, which may not be so satisfactory in life.

April, 1834, was an important date in Schumann's life. A clique of musicians met in Leipzic, in a place where artistic and inartistic people usually meet in Germany—the beerhouse. There, long and earnest discussions took place as to what could be done to rescue music from the languid sentimentality which had replaced serious works, and that, too, only a few years after the death of such men as Weber, Beethoven, and Schubert. An effective means towards this

purpose seemed to Schumann to be a literary organ which would powerfully support a serious movement in that direction. Writing to a friend he says: 'There must be a stop put to this honey-brushing way of criticizing music.' So began the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. The avowed aim of the paper was to maintain the great classical school as the true model of artistic beauty, to encourage rising talent, to combat and crush mediocrity. Truly an admirable programme, to which under Schumann's editorship a number of powerful, enthusiastic, able young men strictly adhered, and in a wonderfully short time succeeded in making their voices heard and appreciated.

It seems so very simple to speak the truth; yet few people know how difficult it is in many instances to know the truth, and how very rarely gratitude attends the speaker of it. Schumann knew this and yet dared it, and he had the satisfaction to see his zeal for the good cause fully appreciated. He upheld Schubert, that incomparable, divine genius, the purest representative of inspiration; he fought for Berlioz at a time

when he was not understood or appreciated, less in his own country than in any other; his enthusiastic pen proclaimed the superiority of Mendelssohn, Heller, Niels Gade, Sterndale Bennett, and many others, from which it is clear that there was no narrow-minded sticking to Germany exclusively, however warm a patriot Schumann may have been; but he took what he thought grand and good in Frenchman, Dane, or Englishman, and stood up for the beautiful in art wherever it came from.

In 1835 he became sole editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, and in February, 1840, he was made a Doctor of Philosophy, both for his proficiency as a composer and for the services he rendered to art and artists in his paper ('Docte judicandis'). To these glories domestic felicity was added, for September 12, 1840, at last crowned his heart's ardent desire, and the maiden for whom, like Jacob, he had served for many long years, became his. She had with equal perseverance kept her promise to wait for him, undaunted by her father's opposition, which did not find vent in straightforward denial but in tempor-

izing, in the hope of fatiguing and weakening the young people's attachment. He finally drove them to have recourse to law, where—forced to give his objections substantial form—he broke down. I remember him well, when he was in Vienna, where he escorted his daughter, who, although thoroughly unknown at her arrival, instantly created a furore. Her first concert, when a host of journalists, artists, and friends were kindly admitted, was the only one which was not crowded. She gave six more, which were crammed full, and she was received with enthusiasm. She was then a pale, not pretty, but very attractive girl, with black eyes that spoke volumes. Perhaps I ought not to say that *friends* were gratuitously admitted to the first concert, because your true friends are not those who accept complimentary tickets, but those who 'turn up and come down handsomely' when you have a paid concert. But you have always a number of friends when there is a question of obliging *them*, and you only learn who your real friends are when it becomes a question of obliging *you*. On concert days Mr. Wieck stood on the stairs leading to the

concert-hall, and admitted or refused in a peremptory manner just as he chose. He was a tall, rigid schoolmaster in appearance. Schumann too was tall, but dignified, noble-looking, and having a habit of walking very cautiously so as to make no noise—in his house he would walk with felt shoes; whereas I remember having been annoyed by the perpetual creaking of Mr. Wieck's boots, for Wieck trod heavily and was altogether a matter-of-fact man. I was a boy then, and accidentally present at a lesson he gave his daughter. She played Herz's variations on a motif from Méhul's 'Joseph,' and in that motif a *glissando* (sliding scale) was introduced. She played it several times. Her father always shook his head deprecatingly. 'Clara,' he said, 'das ist noch nicht ætherisch genug' (that is not sufficiently *ætheric* yet); and she patiently tried, and repeated again and again until she could satisfy him. The first time I heard her was at the house of a banker, M. de Rusbach, where she played most charmingly some of those small pieces (Mazurkas and Nocturnes, etc.) which she first introduced into a Vienna concert-room. The moment

she had done, I remember how, to the general regret, she gathered up her rings and gloves, to run away instantly to another banker's house, there to continue her social success.

It is to the influence of Schumann's wife that several compositions differing from his usual style are ascribed. Certain it is that the fire, the tenderness, the scarcely tamed eccentricity of his mind could not but be favourably influenced by her whom he loved with so persevering a passion, and who showed herself so thoroughly worthy of his worship. It is well known that some of her own songs are edited with his.

Schumann began composing for orchestra when eleven years old, and, as I stated, without having received the slightest tuition for the purpose ; though there is a slight discrepancy in the dates given in his diary, where he states that his first 'untutored' orchestral work dates from the year 1822-23, which would make him twelve to thirteen years old. It is not my purpose critically to enter into Schumann's work as composer for the piano, the voice, and even the orchestra. But it is

impossible not to remark that the secret impulse which swept over the whole surface of Europe after the July revolution, 1830, created in Germany as well as in France that new movement in art which was called the romantic school, headed by Victor Hugo, Ingres, Berlioz, and others in France, and which found not only imitators in Germany, but creators. Schumann's great soul knew no jealousy, and his kindness in judging others as a critic or musician might serve as a model of *bonne camaraderie.* He never spoke ill of anybody, in fact one might say he hardly spoke at all. His mind was too great to be accessible to jealousy, but he execrated, as before mentioned, mediocrity from his innermost soul; and his 'Davidbündler' was only meant to represent a society determined to wage war against the commonplace, as David fought against the Philistines. I fancy, by-the-bye, that learned readers of the Bible would remind Schumann that it was Samson who killed most Philistines with a donkey's jaw. But David's victorious struggle against the great Goliath truly represented the superiority of quality

over quantity. This it was which inspired Schumann, when he tried to rally an able minority against a frivolous majority. He wrote as easily as he spoke with difficulty, and it sometimes happened that he preferred to send a long written explanation to making even a short verbal one. He once passed several hours on a boat alone with a lady, for whom at the time he felt some interest, without once opening his lips. Yet, when he left her he said: 'Never did we understand each other so well as to-day.' Another time he arrived at a friend's house, entering the room with a friendly nod, and going straight to the piano, softly whistling the while. He opened the instrument, played a few chords, made a charming modulation, returning to the first key, shut the piano, and walked out, nodding his head again in a friendly but silent way, and off he was without ever addressing a single word to anybody. It would be taking a perfectly wrong view of the case, to suppose that this was done for the sake of eccentricity. Men who have a real value, and can do what *is* original, rarely condescend to distinguish themselves by

trying to be original in small things, wearing red neckties, or exhibiting peculiarities. It was his way, his whim of the moment so to do, and the only eccentricity about it was, that he took no trouble to disguise it.

Though he rarely took the pains to speak, he knew well how to write. Schumann shows in his criticisms all the kindness of his heart, all the depths of his honest enthusiasm, all the truth of his straightforward character. Nothing is more characteristic than the *bonhomie*, the amiable way in which his velvet paws tear the flesh off his hated Philistines, and he mocks them with the keenest ridicule, without seemingly using a harsh word. The very superficiality of form of Herz and Hünten, the composers for the schoolgirls of that time, rendered their work for some years the fashion, and that curse of the century, the 'variations' on any given motif, the *grande mode*. There always came an introduction of two or three pages, then the *thème* itself, then two brilliant variations of the most valueless kind, then an andante stretching the motif as on a Procrustes' bed, then again

some grasshopper variations, and at last the finale. For years this was the plague of the true musician, and it raged in Leipsic just as fiercely as in Paris. In the midst of these 'elegant' composers came to Leipsic a young Englishman with compositions of his own, a most unassuming artist of twenty-two. It is refreshing to read what Schumann wrote in 1837, first on a composition of Herz, and then on one by the young Englishman just mentioned. 'Only his (Herz's) enemy,' he says, 'could pretend to find on page three an allusion to Kalkbrenner, on page five one to Moscheles, on page six an unwilling homage to Beethoven.' And then commenting on the young Englishman, he says: 'I can only express my astonishment at the refined taste, the calm artistic hand, the rounded perfection of the whole, the euphonious expression, and the purity of thought, which this young composer (I may as well state that Sterndale Bennett is in question) shows—with such modesty that we have to find out for ourselves the effects, which, notwithstanding a marked desire to avoid display, he heaps upon each other, yet without even making

concessions to the public. If there were many artists in the world in the sense of Mr. Bennett, nobody need despair of the future of musical art.'

A Miss Valérie Momy catches it nicely for a Rondo: 'What I think of you, Valérie, I will not tell publicly, but I will whisper it in your ear: you have no heart' (this is a pun on the name of the composer Herz, which means heart in German), 'but you have his finger. Your hand yields not in whiteness to the keys it touches. I could wish, indeed, that the diamonds which adorn it existed in your mind. If you would give it me (the hand) I might accept it, on the single condition that you would never again compose anything.' Then comes the turn of Benedict, who aroused his wrath with a Rondo called 'Les Charmes de Portici,' of which he says that it displeases him, 'not only on account of the very small gift of invention which it shows, but on account of the only purpose for which it seems written —to make Italian ears appreciate German thoughts.'

Schumann wrote some aphorisms under

the well-known pseudonym of Eusebius; though sometimes he also signed Florestan. 'The masses want masses,' he says. Short as this is, it is a biting criticism on the popular preference for quantity and noise rather than quality. So he says of the 'counterpointists,' by whom he means pedants: 'they are not satisfied with a young artist thoroughly adapting the classical form to his mind—he must, to please them, adapt it to their minds.' Let no one despise short sentences, which may yet give you plenty of good advice. So once one of the great physicians of Paris told me that an incredible number of otherwise healthy people suffer from indigestion, not only those who live high and eat both too much and too well, but those also who eat hurriedly, rendering the functions of digestion entirely impossible. Short but practical was the advice he gave me: 'Do not hinder Nature. Do as the cow does, who eats and then stretches herself on the grass quietly to digest.' But then there is this to be said, the cow has time to live, and we have not.

With Schumann, the graceful, amiable

critic, his knowledge, as vast and remarkable if not so universal as that of Jean Paul, is given in instructive, clear, intelligible language, not in Jean Paul's manner, which is sometimes humiliating, because barely intelligible except to those select few who can boast the same extended reading and knowledge. When reproaching a young man named Stein for coming before the world ere he was thoroughly fit—which, by the way, is one of the great misfortunes of this century, where everybody is always in a hurry to reach the pinnacle before he is ready—he tells him the old story that Apollo once particularly favoured a young Greek, enjoining him to let no one know the special patronage he enjoyed. The young man, growing handsomer and more gifted every day, boasted in a weak moment of the god's friendship. Whereupon Apollo, irate, never appeared to him any more, and the youth, heartbroken, his eye perpetually turned to the blinding sun in languid desire for his lost protector, at last succumbed and died, and became the sunflower, still turning his head towards the god who had forsaken him.

Therefrom he draws the moral that you ought not to bring before the public what is not thorough and worthy to be produced. And how right he is! How many good voices in England are sacrificed to the precipitate desire for applause and gain; how thoroughly wrong are nearly all our music schools and so-called Academies! The pupils, instead of doing what the greatest singers did, and what alone can make them reach the fame and merit of a great singer, viz., learning from the beginning, studying perseveringly the elements of the art, the emission, respiration, and exercises, and going on methodically until they find themselves able to grasp the great difficulties—instead of doing this, which is allowing the fruit to ripen ere you pluck it, they rush into the concert-room, sing a trashy ballad *tant bien que mal*, shout if possible high notes to make the gallery applaud, and soon break a voice which has never been seriously trained to resist great work. When this is done and the singer has disappeared, another, with perhaps an excellent voice, intelligence and feeling, is sacrificed in precisely the same

way, and then the people say : Oh, there are no more great singers. Why not ? Because the steam engine has been brought into the cultivation of art.

Instead of going from station to station admiring nature, enjoying life, taking your rest philosophically, and quietly completing your journey—you rush with an express train through life. Those whom you meet are equally pressed for time, and rush past you without either of you recognising each other's features ; running fast is all you want. The mere fact of a train having noisily rushed past is all that you both know. And when you arrive at the end of your life's journey, are you any the more content, the better prepared, the happier ?

In his criticisms and his aphorisms Schumann has erected a lighthouse for those seafaring people whom the slightest storm tosses about, and who will do well to let the light stream into their thoughts. The critic will find there some truths well known, but enunciated with new, clear, sharp logic which may always be recurred to as useful. For instance : ' There are people quite devoid

of talent, who have learned a great deal, and whom accident or circumstances may have driven to become musicians — the artisans in art.' How very true!—and how very often does it happen in our own time that people who have no vocation, no inspiration, no real musical disposition at all, are destined by their parents to become musicians simply because the eldest son has become a lawyer, another is in the Navy, a third in trade, and so the fourth learns the profession of music. He may be industrious, intelligent, hard-working, and learn as much as study can teach, but *poeta nascitur, non fit.* The divine inspiration in music as well as in poetry, when creation is concerned, cannot be learned. It is just for that reason that there are a number of girls who play the piano better than any other instrument. Because to learn the piano, where the tone is ready made for you, you need only sit down and heap hour upon hour of practice, and you must at last arrive at a certain degree of great, sometimes even astonishing execution. Further than that, mere work cannot carry you, and therefore there are such a number of

good pianists, excellent pianists, who do very little because everywhere they are confronted by other pianists who have done the same as they did. But mechanical work more or less industrious, more or less skilful, only produces an artisan, not an artist. Of artisans there are too many—not so of artists!

Another weakness of our time, where everything, from a laundress's bill to a sunset on the Atlantic, is sought to be represented by music, he castigates with these few words: 'Finally you will imagine that you hear the grass growing in Haydn's "Creation."' Seeing a gentleman with an orchestral score in his hand while the orchestra played Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, someone said to him, 'That must be a good musician.' 'By no means,' he answered at once; 'a good musician wants no score when he hears the performance, and wants no performance to enable him to read the score.' That is taking things with rather a high hand, but I would have liked him to see a lady whom years ago I used to observe at Ella's quartet performances always with the music in her hand. Like Schumann's friend, I thought she

must be a good musician, and accidentally finding myself behind her, I looked over her shoulder at the book. Behold! she had a totally different quartet before her, and turned religiously the sheets when she saw others turn. There was a lesson for me about judging from appearances! To a friend of his who said: 'There, I stand before this symphony like a blind man before the gigantic dome at Cologne. I cannot find the way to enter the sacred building.' 'Never mind,' replied Schumann, 'whether you see or not; you can, at any rate, lift off your hat when you hear the bells ringing.'

To those who are so quick to give an adverse opinion upon works of which they understand nothing, he says: 'Pearls do not swim on the surface; they are deep down in the water, and it wants a diver to bring them to the light of day.' Here is a singularly opportune maxim now that Wagner is dead, and that people are talking so much of the school he has founded, which may after all come to nothing: 'The misfortune with imitators is, that they appropriate to themselves

what is obvious to everyone; what is really deep-lying and beautiful in the score they have neither power nor originality to discover, still less to create.' The true difference between pianist and artist, *i.e.*, between those who present to the audience the sum-total of the hours passed in practising, and those whose inspiration carries the listener with them, he characterizes in these few words: 'The first enchants the ear—further he cannot penetrate; the other grasps your heart.' It may seem to readers that it is easier to write such short sentences than long criticisms. But that is not so. Bear in mind what Madame de Staël wrote to her daughter: 'Aujourd'hui je n'ai pas le temps de t'écrire une courte lettre' ('I have not the time to-day to write thee a concise little note'). The wonderful skill of Madame Georges Sand, who never wrote on more than three, usually only two pages, with no more than four lines of her large handwriting on each page, and yet said so much, is a very rare talent indeed. As Schumann says about the 'masses,' quantity is wanted by the vulgar taste. Make a great noise with brass for shilling audiences, you

will 'fetch' them. Delicacy and refined quality want a refined appreciation.

Though Schumann had a crushing power of sarcasm where he wished to crush, yet generally his kindness tempered, not only his own, but other people's words. The man is well known, for instance, who said of Berlioz's music at the time when his revolutionary principles met with great opposition: 'Comme ce serait beau si c'était de la musique!' But Schumann when speaking of Berlioz's 'Episode de la Vie d'un Artiste,' after defending the composer against those who knew not how to appreciate a young man of undeniable genius, refers to those words, but he quotes them thus: 'Cela *est* fort beau, quoique ce ne soit pas de la musique.' Another point which Schumann raises, is one well worth remarking with regard to a number of so-called conscientious criticisms. He goes into every particular of a work, part after part, but after having done so, he asks: 'What service have I now done the reader by this dissecting process? I did it partly to show that such dry work is good for nothing, partly to show to those who know the symphony

that they are wrong not to appreciate its symmetry.'

One word more. The musical criticism in this city of London is mostly in able hands. Yet Schumann's lessons might very beneficially be applied to the pedantic theorist who fancies he does art a great service by particularly dwelling upon the difference between C sharp and D flat, and who pleases by his tedious arguments one reader only, and that is himself. The critic should fly at higher game than seeking for orthographic misprints. Schumann says: 'Composers of secondary order must keep within established laws. Talents of the first order have a right to enlarge those laws, and we have no right to measure them by the yard-measure.' So said Beethoven when they told him he had written consecutive fifths. 'What of it?' he said. 'Why, they are forbidden.' 'Forbidden?' he queried; 'all right then, I permit them.' And can you blame him for it? There must be a difference between the legislator who frames the law and the humble citizen who has only to obey it: 'Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi.' Schumann was an ardent

admirer of all that was great and beautiful in art; his heart was great and tender, his mind was vast, and he lived in an atmosphere far removed from all envy or petty jealousy. To the sad circumstance that the cup was not strong enough for the nectar it held, that the ever-fermenting spirit cracked the vessel, that his brain could not stand the strain of his over-excited nerves, is due the early destruction of one of the greatest and most cultivated of men, full of inspiration in his art, of most lofty honour and talent as a writer.

The autopsy proved that notwithstanding the fine organization of the numerous transverse folds marking the edge of the fourth cavity of the brain (the root of the auditory nerves), overwork produced atrophy of the brain. It is well known that, while sitting at home talking with his wife and friends, he walked out of the room without a hat, and when after a time he was vainly sought in the house, it was discovered that he had jumped into the Rhine, and, although saved at the time, his state was such that he had to be placed in a lunatic asylum, where after

two years' suffering he died in the arms of his faithful wife.

Well might one say of him as he himself said of Beethoven: 'Were I a prince, a temple in the Palladium style would I have erected for him, with nine statues which should be the work of the greatest sculptors. By nine statues surrounding his colossal image I mean the Nine Muses that might stand for his nine symphonies—and there the German singers ought to meet from time to time and perform his works.' How much more has Schumann written for song than Beethoven, the master of instrumentation; and how much worthier a celebration would that be—an impulse for all time—which would teach posterity through his immortal works what genius combined with study, honour, and a kindly feeling for contemporaries can do for humanity!

MOZART.

TO describe the life of so transcendent a genius as Mozart in the narrow limits which, for such a purpose, must appear a very small allowance, is simply impossible, because his fame began when he was four years of age, and although he died at thirty-five years, he published no less than six hundred and twenty-four grand works and left two hundred and ninety-four unpublished. Criticism of his works alone would therefore require extended space; and even to record the facts relating to his eventful life is so difficult a task that I must ask the indulgence of the reader, who cannot expect anything like a complete sketch, still less a biography.

At twelve years old Mozart stood at the

conductor's desk, presiding over the performance of one of his operas, and every day brought some unheard-of, and one might almost say incredible, miracle. I read such a number of different works, small and big, Italian, French, Spanish, English, German, in order to depict the most interesting moments of his life, that I felt like Guizot, who meant to write a little handbook on London when he had been in England a month ; but the moment he began, he found the task rather bigger than he thought at first, and he deferred it for a year, after which he felt the magnitude of the subject to be such that he gave it up altogether. One German biographical work on Mozart alone is written in four volumes, one of which contains more than 700 pages. This will give a slight idea of the materials available. The astounding fact that a man capable of producing such admirable work in such quantities died in poverty, after his famous *début* as a child, I will try to explain. Whatever I thought would interest the English reader I have endeavoured to insert ; but how much have I had to omit!

Wolfgang Amadeus (Johannes Chrysos-

tomus) Mozart was born at Salzburg, Lower Austria, on January 27th, in the year 1756, and was first christened Theophilus. This Greek name his father translated into German, Gottlieb, and then into Latin, Amadeus. He and his sister Anna, five years older, were, of a large family, the only children who remained alive. When Wolfgang was three years old he searched for thirds on the piano; when he was four he began playing, and could learn any minuet in half an hour, any other small piece in an hour. At five he began composing; at six he was a celebrity and spoiled by sovereigns. When he was seven he played the organ at the French Court, as he played the violin, without having had tuition on either instrument. At eight he played at the English Court (August 5th, 1764), and had two sonatas engraved—his Op. 2; the Op. 1 having been engraved the previous year in Paris. He lived here in a 'country house, outside London,' which means Chelsea. He then left for home, and on his return to England dedicated six sonatas to the Queen. It was here that he stood between the legs of John Christian Bach, the

Queen's organist, who played several bars of a piece and let little Mozart continue, then took it up again, and again let the child continue ; and the thread was taken up in such homogeneous style that no one guessed there were two performers. The Emperor Joseph was so amazed with the phenomenal qualities of Wolfgang, that he entrusted him with a libretto for which he ordered him to write the music. This opera, however ('La Finta semplice'), although privately executed, was never performed in public, in consequence of Italian cabals, which I need not touch upon here.

One of the best known anecdotes of his life is that of his father taking him to Rome, where in the Capella Sistina he heard the 'Miserere' by Allegri, which the little fellow wrote from memory—of which more hereafter. The Pope heard of this extraordinary feat, and conferred upon the child his order of the Golden Spur. Young as he was then, two Philharmonic Academies nominated him a member, after subjecting him to the strict examination required, which he finished in about a quarter of the time usually allowed. So

he went from triumph to triumph, fulfilling the usually doubtful prophecy that youthful prodigies will become great men, and yet not only earning too little to live on, but literally not enough to bury him. This marvellous musician, who wrote four symphonies when he was nine years old, and of whom, after his death, Salieri said: 'It is a great calamity, but verily the best thing that could happen to us, for had he lived we should not have earned a piece of bread with our work,'—might have been safe and happy had he done what his great countryman Handel did, viz., accept a call to live in England. In 1790, O'Reilly, manager of the Pantheon, wrote him a letter in French, offering £300 if he would come and write an opera in London. It was not to be. The letters which Mozart wrote to his wife contain such desperate phrases as this: 'Pay a hundred pounds on my return!—I cannot pay ten.' In others his tenderness is more marked: 'You sent me a coat and waistcoat, and I searched patiently in both through every pocket for a word from your hand, but in vain.' 'Don't be offended,' he says in another,

'when I tell you not to make free with people. I have every confidence in you; and as you mean no evil, behave so that all must respect you; be civil and courteous, but no more.' Then again he writes: 'You know I have board and lodging here' (Frankfurt) 'for three pounds a month, but I can neither live nor can I eat alone.' I give these extracts to show at once the childlike, tender, but absolutely weak character of the man. His carelessness was such that he threw his MSS. under the piano, where they lay like waste-paper *(in Fetzen)*, and the copyists could help themselves to as much as they liked. In an English dictionary, published in 1815, this passage occurs: 'We know little of him except his essays (*sic*) on the harpsichord. They are novel, unusual, but wild and capricious.' This criticism is all the more astonishing when we see with what enthusiasm Burney, who met Mozart in Bologna, had written about him. Since he had been dead about twenty-five years at the time (1815), there was every opportunity of studying his works, which fill in Koechel's Catalogue 551 pages. It is sad, but undeniable, that Mozart re-

mained a child all his life : childlike in simplicity, candid in his music, and childlike, sometimes even childish, in his acts. You will find this expression in all his portraits.

All the family likenesses in the Mozarteum in Salzburg point unmistakably to the character of a good, genial, kind-hearted, but I am sorry to say distinctly unpractical man. As to his genius for music, probably the greatest ever known, there can be no doubt; but genius for music does not absolutely imply strength of mind, or greatness in other respects. Limited as we are, so are all our qualities limited ; the same quality may even be eminent in one direction, and lacking in another.

There is a great musician who knows something like three thousand pieces by heart, and never remembers people's faces unless he has seen them innumerable times. So have I shown the reverse in the Emperor Napoleon, who knew every man he had once seen, but was quite unable to recognise a piece of music however often he might have heard it.

Mozart's genius as a musician, one would

think, could by no means be exaggerated; nevertheless I have seen it stated in print, that 'all the music created since Guido d'Arezzo, who invented the musical signs, up to the end of the last century, had only one aim and purpose: to create Mozart.' That is saying that Palestrina, Bach, Handel, and Gluck deserve not even a mention! That Mozart was really a phenomenon, the unprecedented and unimitated feats which will hereafter be related amply prove.

Mozart's father, the son of a bookbinder, was a very clever and religious man, and frequently inquired of young Wolfgang whether he had been to his confession, which he considered of great importance. The effect of confession in after life is, however, not very encouraging either with young Mozart or with any other great composer. I will not enter into a discussion whether religious belief is or is not to be cultivated. There are people who think that only those who believe blindly can be blessed. All I wish to state is the result of such education. Leopold Mozart speaks in one of his letters of a Baron Hopfgarten:

'What an amiable man! He really is an honourable man, and has every quality he should have, *although* he is a Protestant.' The conviction that the Catholic religion ought alone to prevail in the world, did not render him more charitable in his judgment of men, because, according to his idea, there was no greater folly than to believe in unselfishness or friendship. He tried to give these impressions to his son, but without result; for Mozart was entirely the victim of his soft heart, as we shall see in the course of this sketch.

It will ever be a debated question with sceptics whether you ought to be good and kind, which according to certain cynics is tantamount to being stupid, or whether you ought before all things to take care of Number One. I imagine that the solution lies in pleasing yourself. Let everyone regulate his life to his own satisfaction. Leopold Mozart, the father, doubting all others, fared no better himself, for however desirous he was to acquire knowledge, and gain reputation as a lawyer, he reached nothing beyond the position of groom in waiting to Count Thurn, canon at Salzburg.

He had, however, seriously studied music, and became afterwards violin soloist and sub-conductor to Archbishop Sigismund, and he not only composed, but he engraved six sonatas for the pianoforte (then the harpsichord). He also composed sacred music and eighteen symphonies, and that was only a small part of what he wrote. Such voluminous work, which in our days would seem at all events a proof of fertility, and which in those days was only a drop in a river, compels us to ask the question, 'How is it that our life would barely suffice to copy what those great men created in such profusion?' I fear we should have to answer with a general *peccavi*, and say that those men devoted themselves to their work, and thought of nothing but serious contributions to the art or the science for which they lived; whereas with us work is but a means to attain glory or fortune, not an end in itself. There was a very generous man in Vienna a long time ago, whom a very poor man asked to help him with some money. Not knowing the man, yet desirous to help him if he could, he asked how much he wanted. 'Oh, not

much,' replied the pauper; 'three or four pounds, or sufficient cloth for a dress-coat.' 'What!' replied my friend, 'four pounds? Never! you shall have nothing, you impudent fellow!' 'Right,' said the other; 'you give me nothing, you leave me to my misery, and you insult me, simply because I am poor. But—be it so. Since that is all the justice we have to expect, I will go and do what I have never done, and may you——' A sob prevented his speaking further, and he went away. My friend, already repenting his harsh words, and fearing that he had driven the man to stealing, or perhaps some desperate act, called him back, and said, 'Well, look here: I will show you that I am not so hard as you say, and that there *is* a divine Providence; you ought never to have doubted it. Here are the four pounds you demand. But you said you would go and do what you have never done before; confess now what that was.' 'Well, sir, since you will know, and you have left me no choice but to tell you,—I would have gone and—worked!' This of course was an unexpected reply; but the fact is that the motto of our times is—not to

work, but to enjoy yourself before the fruit of your labour entitles you to do so.

Mozart, the father, published an 'Essay on a thorough (gründlich) Violin Method,' based on the principle that every instrument ought as much as possible to sing; and he therefore advises his pupils always to hear good singers. His ideas were so lofty that he added: 'In order to be able to play with intelligence, a performer on the violin ought even to study Rhetoric and Poetry.' Such a study can do nobody harm, but where the necessity for it arises, so far as violin-players are concerned, I fail to see. However, everybody judges necessity differently. If you ask a man, 'How much do you want a year?' he will tell you: 'Oh! very little; only the necessaries of life.' But what things *are* necessary? There we come upon different opinions. I know a lady whose husband had lost large sums on the Stock Exchange, and therefore reduced his wife to 'bare necessaries;' she told me with tears in her eyes, 'I'll do my best to live on £20,000 a year, but how I shall manage I cannot say.' Cardinal Richelieu expressed quite other ideas about what

seemed to him necessary. A painter brought him a carefully worked picture, which he said in his own opinion was a *chef d'œuvre;* and very likely it was—painters are so modest. The Cardinal looked at it, and said: 'How much do you want for it?' 'A thousand francs,' said the artist. 'What a sum to ask!' said the Cardinal. 'Éminence,' he replied, 'il faut bien vivre.' 'Je n'en vois pas la nécessité,' replied Richelieu.

Another piece of advice I cannot help quoting, because it so vividly points to a bad habit of our own times. Mozart says: 'Do not perpetually make your notes tremble as if you had a fever.' Hear a number, especially of French, singers. Affectation, as if their emotion at every phrase would choke them, prevents their bringing out a healthy sound; and whether they call it *vibrato* or *tremolando*, it is unnatural, and therefore to be condemned.

Of the seven children whom Leopold Mozart had, five died when one year old or before, only two survived—Maria Anna, the sister (five years older than her brother), and our great Wolfgang Amadeus. The first

indication of the stuff Mozart was made of was his attention when the father gave lessons to his sister when she was eight years old. This interested the boy (then three years old) to such an extent that he searched for himself consonances on the piano, and when he found an interval that sounded well, he showed his joy with such exuberance that the father, just to pass the time, began teaching him too.

At five years of age he began composing without the slightest guide. He formed the pieces on the piano, and played them to his father, who then wrote them down. It is strange that he did not behave like a child when seated at the piano. Nobody dared to address a joke to him or to talk aloud. In a letter of his father's it is stated that some of his friends, who saw the child so very serious, predicted that he would not live long. Although he willingly studied every subject his father told him to work at, music filled his soul from early childhood to such an extent that when his toys had to be taken from one room to another, he insisted on a march being sung, to the strains of which he walked

in time and in procession, with the person who assisted him. From a letter of Court-trumpeter Andreas Schachtner to Mozart's sister, I take the following details. I may first be allowed to say that a trumpeter then was not what he may be now ; and that this Mr. Schachtner was a man, not only of musical but literary culture, who often lent a helping hand with Mozart's libretti. He writes: 'Once I came home from church with your father, and we found Wolferl fully engaged with his pen.' Wolferl—the diminutive of Wolfgang—means in German just the same as wolf in English. 'The child had a paper before him, and would not let us see what he wrote because it was not ready. It was full of ink-spots, because he pushed his quill every time to the bottom of the ink-stand. His father at last took it away from him, and found it was the MS. of a concerto for piano, and on his remarking that it was too difficult, the little boy jumped up and said, "It is a concerto. Let those who want to play it study hard," and he sat down to the instrument and played it.' Evidence of his miraculous capacities was given in his

seventh year. A quartet was played, and he begged to be allowed to play the second fiddle. His father, knowing that the boy had never had regular instruction, would not hear of it. The boy insisted. So the father ordered him out of the room. He then resorted to the infallible means with which children and women govern their so-called masters the men — he began to cry. Of course one of the friends present begged that the child might be allowed to have his will, and, to the utter amazement of all present, he sat down and played without a fault, first the second, then the first fiddle, until it was the father's turn to shed tears of surprise and admiration.

Another miracle related by the same Mr. Schachtner I beg leave to doubt. He says that the boy, playing on his own little fiddle, said to him : ' You should bring your violin here ; it is just half a quarter of a tone sharper than mine ;' and on testing this incredible statement, it is said that it was found to be exactly true. It seems to me absolutely impossible that anybody, even if much older than this child, should be able by

memory to fix the difference of the pitch of two instruments to an eighth of a tone. The boy, however, did so many things supposed to be impossible, that there is no insisting on what he might not have accomplished. On his first journey he had an opportunity of appreciating the generosity of those art patrons who are so very liberal with other people's money. How often have I seen people in a high position give concerts for a certain charity. How do you think they assist that charity? With their money? Oh no! They go or write to any singer with a great name to beg for *gratuitous* help to a fund for a hospital or a church, etc. The singer accepting, that name is instantly paraded before singers of less celebrity as a trap, and when the programme is full, and the charity benefits to the extent of some hundred pounds, through the time, the talent, and the names of the artists, not one of them ever gets anything beyond thanks and a smile; and very often not even that.

Little Mozart was stopped on his journey to Vienna at Passau by the Archbishop, who

graciously kept him five days, and on his departure handed him one *ducat* (eight shillings). That he played the organ when six years old to the admiration of the *patres* to whom it belonged will surprise no one. Schopenhauer, the German philosopher *à la mode* just now, says: 'A scholar, a great authority, is a man who has learned what books can teach him. A genius is a man who knows without learning, and teaches the world what he never learned.' Of this, Mozart was the truest illustration. It is a well-known story, that at Court, where the Emperor Charles VI., father of Maria Theresa, a very good musician, accompanied at the piano from figured bass, the Court conductor turned round and said, 'Really, Majesty, you accompany in such a musician-like style that I have no doubt you could replace me any day.' 'Thank you for your kind opinion,' said the Emperor, 'but I must content myself with my humble position.' Music being traditional at Court, when Mozart arrived, his fame had already preceded him. The Emperor, Joseph II.—that greatest of Austrian Emperors—defied the

little wonder to do certain things: to play with only one finger, or to allow the keyboard to be covered with a silk handkerchief and to play all the same; and he did it all. But he slipped and fell down after he had played. Not one of the Archduchesses came to his aid but Marie Antoinette, who lifted him up, and he threw his arms around her and said, 'You are kind. I'll marry you!' 'And why so?' asked the Empress. 'From gratitude,' he said, evidently thinking that he conferred a great favour. The Emperor often sent the Court carriage for him, which reminds me of a French actress under Louis XV., who was requested to come to Court and recite; but she was so spoiled that she would consent only on condition that the King's carriage, with two of his *chambellans à grande perruque*, came to fetch her. Her whims were taken as orders, and complied with; but when she drove to Court in great state, she suddenly exclaimed, 'Oh, what would I give to stand in the street and see myself pass!'

When Mozart was seven years old he played in one concert the harpsichord, a concerto on

the violin, the figured bass to a symphony, and improvised on the organ. It is stated that when the boy saw the organ, in his sixth year, he asked his father's permission to try and play it. The father went up with him to the loft and explained the use of the pedal; and the boy, whose little legs could not reach from the seat, played the organ standing, using the pedal like a master, and with the greatest ease, not in the least surprised himself at his achievement, as if it was self-evident that he would know whatever he wanted to know, without taking the trouble of learning it.

The arrival of the family in Paris furnished Mozart with an opportunity of seeing one of the historical celebrities of France, the Marquise de Pompadour. She ordered the little man to be put on a table before her, but when the child, who seems to have been of a somewhat demonstrative disposition, approached his face to hers, she motioned him back, so that he indignantly exclaimed: 'Who is she who won't let me kiss her, when my Empress has kissed me!' The Queen herself was much more gracious; she caused him

to be brought into the dining-room on New Year's Day, had him placed next to her, and gave him some of all the sweets, while she talked with him in German and translated the conversation to Louis XV. Of course his success at Court opened all Parisian society to the *enfant prodige.*

Here Mozart accompanied a lady without seeing the music, simply guessing the harmonies, and after he had gone through it once, he played the whole, melody and harmony together, from memory, and instantly extemporized a piece on it before the audience. Then, his father thought, the time had come when he should produce his son as a composer, and he had four sonatas for piano and violin engraved, the composer being then seven years of age! The letter of dedication which he wrote to Madame Victoire of France, the second daughter of the King, bears this singular signature: 'Votre très humble, très obéissant, *et très petit* serviteur, W. M.' This was the Opus 1 of the grand series of his immortal master-works.

One of Mozart's great patrons in Paris was Melchior Grimm, the friend of Rousseau and

Diderot, who may be said, with Voltaire, to have sown the seed of the great French Revolution. Mozart then came to England, and remained from April, 1764, until July, 1765. The letters of the father Mozart are filled with enthusiastic gratitude for the reception his family received from King George III. and Queen Charlotte, who was herself a good musician. Wolfgang's organ-playing made the greatest sensation. J. C. Bach, eleventh son of the great John Sebastian, was then music-master to the Queen, as mentioned, and he put the difficult works of Handel, Bach, and Abel before the boy. But he played them all at sight, so that Bach was quite amazed. The first work he published in England consisted of six sonatas. The dedication to the Queen was accompanied, I am sorry to say, by a long and far too humble letter, which was not written by him, but, according to the custom of those times, by a literary man *ad hoc.*

Of course Leopold Mozart took his son to Italy. It is not surprising that a people so excitable as the Italians, nearly went out of their minds at seeing such a young boy a

singer, organist, pianist, and violinist, whilst he put himself easily in the foreground as a composer. They gave him, before the whole audience, a theme for a fugue, which he instantly and correctly improvised. I pass over his triumphs in Milan, where he received the *scrittura* (order to write an opera for the Carnival), and other cities, to say that the Mozarts arrived during Holy Week in Rome, where at that time the famous 'Miserere' by Allegri was sung by the Capella Sistina. This work was held in such honour, that to copy it was forbidden under penalty of excommunication. Mozart heard it, wrote the whole of it from memory, and visiting the church again on Good Friday, with his MS. in his hat, he corrected the few mistakes which he found he had made. The affair produced such a sensation that he was asked to sit down to the piano and play it before the singer Cristofori, who, perfectly astounded, declared the whole to be exactly correct.

I may here mention that low intrigues prevented his opera 'La Finta Semplice' from being performed, notwithstanding the express order of the Emperor of Austria.

The manager, an Italian, independent of the Court, even told old Mozart that, if he compelled him to give it, he would have it hissed off the stage, so a private performance of another operatic score by the boy, 'Bastien et Bastienne,' was arranged at the house of his great friend Mesmer. The first public performance of an opera by young Mozart was 'Il Mitridate, Re di Ponto,' at Milan, on December 26, 1770, the composer and conductor being fourteen years old. The success was such that, before his departure, he received the *scrittura* for next year, at the increased salary of 1,300 *gigliati* and furnished apartments free. The Empress Maria Theresa entrusted him with the composition of a serenata (not a serenade, but a sort of a two-act opéra comique with much ballet music), the opera having been confided to those two illustrious men, Metastasio and Hasse. The latter, seeing the great success of young Mozart's work, exclaimed, 'Questo ragazzo ci farà dimenticar tutti' ('That boy will throw us all into oblivion'). An order for the *second* opera in the Venetian Staggione, besides the one he had to write for Milan, was

the consequence, and so far even a greater honour, as in every season three operas were performed. The height of the season being the middle, the second opera was the most important.

It is generally conceded that Scarlatti gave to the opera the form and style which it maintained to the end of the eighteenth century. Scarlatti was the master of Hasse above mentioned, and it is perhaps not generally known that this young pupil of his was the cause of the celebrated Cat's Fugue, one of the favourite fugues of Anton Rubinstein, who performed it here in his historical programme in May. The fact is that Scarlatti one morning sat dull, and incapable of work, not knowing why he could find no ideas, when young Hasse, always full of mischief, came in carrying a small bundle, from which a red feather protruded. Scarlatti, foreseeing some nonsense, scolded him, when Hasse dropped his bundle, out of which jumped Scarlatti's favourite cat, wearing a wig, and a hat with a red feather, tied over its head, and was chased about by Hasse and his little dog. Scarlatti ordered Hasse

to be quiet and let him work, when Hasse's dog got hold of the wig, which gave way. The cat, in terror, pounced upon the open piano, running up and down and jumping heavily on three notes. During this operation Hasse had made his exit, followed by his valiant dog, carrying off the trophy with the red feather. When he returned, after a few hours, his master held an open sheet of music in his hand, and said, 'L' ho trovato, è la fuga del gatto.' He had taken the notes which the cat had touched as a theme, and made the celebrated fugue on it.

Even in Mozart's time the recitatives were the principal things, and not the arias, duets, etc. This explains the form of the Italian contracts which the managers made him sign, and in which he bound himself to bring, at a certain date, all the recitatives ready, so as to have *only* the arias to fill in during his sojourn, and in presence of the singers, who decided whether the music was acceptable or not; which proves that in those times, as now, the fate of composers, whatever their knowledge or genius, lay in the hands of those to whom nature had, by accident, given

vocal cords a sixtieth part of an inch wider or narrower.

Although ladies sang in the opera, the real prima donna in those times was the *primo uomo castrato,* who possessed the science of singing in the highest degree. Against their *arie di bravura,* Metastasio wrote most angrily. 'You must not think of situation, sense, or reason; they sing to rival the violin, and have no more mind or thought than that instrument.' And yet how many are there of our singers who could do, leaving sense or reason out of the question, what those artists did—overcome the difficulties which long and patient study had made them vanquish, and give a performance by any means comparable in finished technique to those of the last century! Pope Innocent XI. forbade ladies to sing in the church, or even on the stage, and his prohibition was long maintained in the Ecclesiastical States. Even now, no ladies' chorus can sing in Catholic churches, and although Rossini, who was highly esteemed in Italy, wrote to Pio IX.—I have seen his letter—to induce him to revoke this edict, he received a very courteous answer

to say that he had demanded that which was impossible, and although the impossible was easy to a genius like his (Rossini's), the Pope could not do what would be a violation of a 'sacred' custom.*

Hitherto we have only seen Mozart as a child and a youth, a prodigy certainly; but the exception to the rule that *enfants prodiges* never become great artists. Although positively inspired like a great artist whenever engaged in musical pursuits, whether performing on one of the three instruments on which he had acquired such fame—clavecin, violin and organ—or with the pen in his hand composing, whenever his inspiration left him he instantly became a child again. He used to take a stick between his legs and hop about as if on horseback.

When in Italy, although Maestro di Capella, decorated by the Pope with the Golden Spur, and honorary member of two Philharmonic Academies, his letters to his sister show

* Since these lines were printed Pope Leo XIII. has made up his mind to break through this unnatural 'sacred' custom, to have no more *castrati*, and to admit ladies' voices in the church.—Art. iv.

that his innocent heart remained child-like. Every letter finished, 'I kiss mamma's hand a thousand times.' He had a wonderful facility for mixing some tune written all in Italian—or in French—with German words, not unfrequently even with words in the Austrian dialect. So he invariably calls his sister Anna, 'Nannerl.' He tells us that he was admitted to kiss the toe of St. Peter, but having the misfortune to be so small, he had to be lifted up to the statue. In another letter, after telling his sister in all simplicity that the Padre Martini, the greatest master of counterpoint then known, had written a testimonial stating that, after serious examination, he found the boy as advanced and able as any master of the art known to him, he begs she will be good enough to send him his multiplication tables, because he is ashamed not to be able to make out the items of a very simple bill. 'P.S.—I just wrote the great aria "Se ardire e speranza" from Metastasio's "Demofonte."' Look at this letter of three lines: 'I am, thank God, in good health, and I kiss mamma's hands, and my sister's face, nose, mouth and neck. Oh,

what a pen!' From Bologna, in 1770, he writes as follows:

'Can't help it, I must have a ride on a donkey. It's the fashion here, so I must try it too. We have the honour to walk about with a Dominican, who is reputed to be a saint, but I do not believe it. I have had the honour to dine with that saint. He drank all the time a good lot of wine, and concluded with a big tumblerful of strong wine, and for his dessert he had two large slices of melon, peaches, pears, five cups of coffee, a whole assortment of spices, and two plates of milk. P.S.—I am so sorry to hear of poor Martha's illness. I hope, with the Lord's aid, she will get better; but even if not, she ought not to rebel. God's will is always best, and to the Lord you must leave the decision whether it is more advantageous for us to be in this world or the other. Many kisses to mamma and you, and to all our friends, gentlemen and ladies. By-the-bye, my fingers ache from writing so many recitatives. The copyist was here just now. He says he has to send my opera immediately to the Court at Lisbon. Mademoiselle my sister, I have the honour to be, from this to

eternity, your very faithful brother.' From Munich he writes: 'Last night my opera was performed, and with such success that I cannot describe to mamma the immense row. Applause and shouting after every aria; and even between the opera and the ballet, where usually all are silent, such salvoes of applause! The Court congratulated me, and said such nice things. I shall have to stay here for the second performance, because I feel they'll want me much. A thousand kisses to Pimperl' (the dog). 'Your small composer.' The feelings expressed in these letters are very touching.

But if Mozart's father had done everything *pour lui faire tout savoir*, he could not give him the *savoir faire* so necessary to a man that he may not fall a prey to a hundred temptations, especially to the one temptation to which men so young are rather liable to yield. Give them what advice you like, reason how you may, the moment comes when all reason is thrown to the wind. And to 'maître' Cupid Mozart had to submit. She was fifteen, very pretty, had a nice voice, wanted his musical advice very much.

The sympathy between a young man and a young girl of fifteen is very easily mistaken for undying love, and this misconception has deceived many young hearts, and will deceive them, so long as young hearts exist; now these two studied most perseveringly together until Mozart felt he could not tear himself away. When at last the father's anxiety for his son's career made him urge all possible reasons, to which there were endless replies and excuses, the father exerted all his authority, and ordered his son away. Tears were copious on both sides, and the girl's father followed Mozart down to the house door for a last farewell, and, stretching his arms out in blessing, remained standing there as long as he could catch a glimpse of him. However, when Mozart returned to Germany, after working long in Paris, and his first visit was to the house of his adored, and he came in, full of love and impatience, but—in a red coat, then the fashion in Paris, she did not like the coat, and pretended not to recognise him. Mozart, cut to the quick, sat down to the piano and played a song with the refrain, 'What care I for a girl!'

But it was only 'bonne mine à mauvais jeu,' and he felt deeply grieved. There was a case within my own experience, where an Austrian girl fell in love with a young hussar, and, being an only child, insisted on having him and no other. All scenes and reproaches availed nothing. The officer she must have. At last her father, seeing that she fell ill, and fearing that the consequences of his refusal might become more serious, consented, but on condition that the young officer should tender his resignation, because he would not expose his daughter in case of war to the possibility of becoming a widow. Consequently the officer resigned, donned civilian clothes, and presented himself at his would-be father-in-law's house. But when the girl saw him without his gold-braided uniform, she found all his charm had gone. She would not have him. *And she did not take him*, on account of his coat, just as Aloysia Weber treated Mozart.

The father of Mozart was a shrewd, practical business man, who, with the greatest self-sacrifice, had done everything in his power for the education of his children. But he had neglected one point, or it was a point

not to be reached—he had not given the young genius, whose wings lifted him perpetually to heaven, a clear idea of the importance of looking after one's business on earth. He did nothing but compose, but he gave his compositions away, and on the thanks of the people he could not live. His salary as Court composer and conductor to the Archbishop of Salzburg was twenty-five shillings a month, and it was only when driven mad by the tyranny of his master that at last he threw up the paltry engagement. He then travelled, with the avowed purpose of making money; but he never understood how to manage so as to get the value of his work, even at its estimation in those early days. Unpractical most people are whom Nature has endowed with genius, but in this Mozart could give points to anyone. The fearful poverty and misery of his life and of his death were in a great measure due to his own softheartedness. Frederick William II. offered him, after his marriage, and when he stood greatly in need of money, three times as much as his salary in Vienna. He accepted, but, taking an audience of his Emperor, he told

his Majesty that he was bound to go because he could not live on the meagre salary the Court allowed him. The Emperor, who knew well what a distinguished man he was going to lose, exclaimed, 'Mozart, are you capable of leaving me?' Touched by this sentimental question, Mozart turned round and said, 'No, Majesty, I remain.' Of course all his friends asked him: 'But at least you told the Emperor that he must raise your salary?' 'Who,' he said, 'could in such a moment think of such trifles?' The trifles comprehending the existence of his family and himself! Certainly this is one of the clearest illustrations of the wisdom of Talleyrand's cautious advice: 'Méfiez vous de votre première impression, c'est presque toujours la bonne.' His mother, with whom he travelled, was scarcely more practical, and the father had to advise and to grumble—*post festum.*

One of the reasons why Mozart did not make money enough as a man when he had made so much as a child is, that people in general are more fond of something wonderful than capable of appreciating serious merit. What he did as a child was miraculous; there was no

precedent for such performances, no one else could do the same. When he was a young man he did what others did, even if he did it much better.

The immense value of his compositions only the greatest composers understood. Thus it happened that Mozart made the little money which came to his pocket, sparingly enough, as a pianist, while he had trouble to earn money with his compositions, which, moreover, he often gave away. It is the same in our own days. Rubinstein, who told me many years ago that he would give up playing and only 'soil paper,' has to this day to play in order to make money. Mozart played once at one of those numerous little Courts which then existed, every Archbishop and every *Churfürst* having a palace and employés, officials and band. He wanted to travel to Paris, and of course money was needed. He complained that they presented him with two swords, with snuff-boxes and kisses. 'The money of the *fermiers généraux*,' his father writes, 'goes to Lucretias, who don't stab themselves.' Instead of money he received a

watch; and he writes to his father, 'I have no money for the journey, and this is the fifth watch I have received. I have a good mind to get two watch-pockets made, and to have a watch, with a long chain to it, hanging out of each pocket, so that they should see I want no more watches.' In a similar manner Madame Patti said once, when I informed her that it was on the *tapis* to give her by subscription a golden laurel crown. 'What,' she exclaimed, 'another laurel crown! That is the forty-third, then. Pray tell them I would, by a long way, prefer a diamond bracelet.' Poor Mozart would have preferred cash. He was not born with a grand soprano voice; he was not ready with his *roulades* to tickle the ear of opera-goers; he was only a composer of immortal works, sacred and operatic, vocal and instrumental, which, since his death, have formed the study and admiration of generations; but then, as the French say, you must be dead in order to earn your living. His father preached perpetually about the necessity of making money, instead of giving hundreds of lessons for nothing, which was very kind, but very stupid. Mozart re-

plied that he thought, so long as he was well, he was quite unconcerned, because happiness was merely in imagination. This is an idea which seems much nearer the truth than one might think, because if you can content yourself with forty pounds a year, and have no further wants, you may be happy; while a palace, a yacht, a pack of hounds, forty horses in the stable, will not suffice to make you contented if you wish for a throne. Mozart was not extravagant in his desires. In one house he gave the daughter lessons for the dinner; in another for the supper; and where he was paid he received 3s. 4d. per lesson.

Now came the important event in the life of every young man, the beard. Of course his mother wrote about it to his father, and the father replied in the most serious way possible: 'I wish to be informed whether Wolfgang's beard is cut off with small scissors, singed or shaved?' And the mother, in despair, replied: 'We have tried our best with the scissors, but I am seriously afraid we shall have to resort to the barber.' To which the father retorts: 'Leave all to the Lord. I wish to be sure of one thing only.

Does he attend to his confession? In nothing can we succeed unless we have the blessing of Heaven; and if I did not think that he attends punctually to his confessions, I should be very unhappy indeed.' This doubt seems to have exasperated young Mozart, because, humble as his letters were to his father, he wrote thus: 'Your letter I have to thank you for, but you made me really angry with your doubt about my going regularly to confession. What do you think of me? I can assure you that there are people twenty and thirty years older than I am, and I should be ashamed to speak or act as they do. Humbly I pray, do not doubt me any more!' This exaggerated piety did him some harm in practical life. He had an opportunity to go to Paris, then as now the Mecca of artists, with two gentlemen (Ramm and Wendling), and he refused because they were not religious enough. No doubt his father's perpetual insistance on his performing all religious rites with all possible severity had much to do with it. Altogether the father guided and advised him too much. It resulted in the boy remaining a boy always.

I have often regretted this tendency on the part of parents on the Continent as compared with the sensible practice of English parents, who try to make men of their children as early as possible. A boy must learn how to stand on his own legs, or he will never be independent. He will always want to be advised, supported, and helped. It will come to that, or at least very nearly to that, which happened in Russia at the well-known moment when the late Czar Alexander thought the time had come to emancipate all his serfs and give freedom, sudden freedom, to those who had not learned how to use it. What was the consequence? One man of that grade came to me, and asked me to explain to him his *misfortune.* My father, he said, was a serf—my grandfather was a serf: *What have I done that I should be free?* Accustomed to run to the master for help or advice in any emergency, they felt freedom as a deprivation of a kind patron and not as a blessing.

Mozart writes to his father: 'To be ready at a certain hour for a pupil at his house or at mine is a bore. I would much rather give

lessons for nothing to anyone who has talent and learns something.' To which the father retorts: 'Would you indeed prefer giving a pretty girl lessons for nothing to earning money and paying your way? And how am I to manage? I am fifty-eight years old, and have to run from house to house and earn a little money to pay my debts and to be able to send you some.'

Mozart remained in Mannheim, and deliberately let slip the opportunity of going to Paris. Voltaire says that whoever you be, you have to submit to one master. The fact is that Mozart had again found his master—Cupid. There lived in Mannheim a very honest but very humble man yclept Weber, who had six children, four of whom were daughters. The father was copyist and prompter, and earned £20 a year, and for fourteen years the family had lived on that scanty income. Aloysia, then fifteen years old, bright and attractive, with an excellent voice, and a good musician, stole Wolfgang's heart at first sight.

The journey he made with the family, instead of going to Paris, produced no brilliant results. A Princess of Oranien received

them in her palace, where she lodged the artists. Mozart played twelve times, and Miss Weber sang thirteen times; moreover, Mozart composed for the princess four arias and a symphony, for which he received seven guineas, and Miss Weber received five. Since his travelling expenses had absorbed three and a half guineas, it will be easily seen that neither performances nor compositions were prodigiously rewarded.

The father, on hearing of the attachment, was furious, and asked him: 'Do you know what you are about to do? Do you not see that you have to choose between a brilliant existence, the admiration of posterity who should read about you in books, or the enviable fate, for the sake of a young girl, of dying in an attic, on the bare floor, with a lot of hungry children in misery?' The father little knew how nearly his prophecy was to be fulfilled. Although Mozart loved as only a man of twenty-two can love, his father's advice and the terrible reality which tears the veil of illusion from any poetic dream, saved him on this occasion from sacrificing every prospect on Cupid's altar,

for, although he loved her for ever and evermore, and she loved him for a still longer term, and they ever repeated their despair and suffering, his beloved, as we have seen, objected to his coat and married another man.

In Paris Mozart found that what had made him the fashion was the unaccustomed precocity of his talent, a thing so rare that it astonished everybody; but the charm of novelty having worn off, he had very little to hope from his French friends. He was not diplomatist enough to go with the times, and the times were deplorable enough for art in general and music especially. 'L'art que nous appelons, en langage sacré, *chanter*,' says Grimm, 'devient un terme honteusement profané en France, et appliqué à une façon de pousser les sons hors de son gosier—c'est ce qu'on appelle chez nous—*crier*.' About two years ago I received a letter from Sims Reeves, with this memorable line—'Shouting high notes is nowadays called singing.' And yet one hundred and ten years have passed between the French and the English utterance on the same subject. 'Nil novi sub sole.'

Mozart never thought of writing an opera in English, although he had been most hospitably received in London; but when he was on his way to Paris for the second time, he expressed his wish, above all, to write a new opera, in French rather than in German, or in Italian rather than in French, although German was his mother-tongue. I cannot refrain from mentioning here Mozart's dislike to play to people who did not understand him, or who talked, or sketched, or did anything else but listen when he played. That, too, was so a hundred years ago; that is so to-day. I remember a great violin-player who, a few years ago, played in a *soirée* in Grosvenor Square, and was so enraged at the people's loud conversation while he performed, that he asked the accompanist, after finishing his piece, to accompany at once the solo set down for him in the second part, and let him go away. This obnoxious habit of talking is not only a want of courtesy to the artist who performs, but to the other invited guests who may wish to listen. And it is a mistake to suppose that only a certain class of people do so who have not been

educated enough to acquire refined manners. It happened to me who write these lines to refuse playing at the house of a Duchess because the people talked so loudly, until she said, 'I will make them listen.' And she stood by me and hushed the people two or three times in succession, until they stopped talking. But what pleasure for an executant to have his audience coerced into listening! An anecdote of what happened at no less distinguished a salon than that of the Emperor of Russia will furnish another illustration.

The Emperor Nicholas, one of the handsomest and most imperious sovereigns who ever sat on the Russian throne, received the celebrated Abbé Liszt one evening in order to let the Imperial family enjoy the incomparable pianist's genius. While he was playing, the Emperor spoke rather loudly to one of his aides-de-camp, and Liszt suddenly stopped. The Emperor turned round, and in his 'six-footest' manner exclaimed: 'Eh bien, Monsieur Liszt?' 'Je ne veux pas déranger la conversation de votre Majesté,' said Liszt. 'Oh, vous ne me dérangez nullement,' im-

patiently said the Emperor. 'C'est qu'alors votre Majesté me dérange,' said Liszt, drawing in his velvet paw. The effect of this remark was that Nicholas cut short the concert, and next day sent the Director of Police to the great Abbé to express the Emperor's fear that the Russian frost might injure the Abbé's health, and his Majesty's advice to seek a milder climate. With the Emperor Nicholas no joking was advisable.

Perhaps I may be allowed to quote two incidents with regard to that great sovereign which came within my knowledge. They will show that if his employés, or any of his subjects, trembled before his irate eye, he was inflexibly just to high and low. It once happened, on the Russian frontier, that an officer, commanding the *piquet de garde*, was playing at cards with a friend, when a Jew tried to smuggle himself into the Russian empire without proper *visé* of his passport. The sentinel on guard arrested him and reported to the officer. 'All right,' said he, and continued his *lansquenet*. But it is to be feared that luck did not attend his venture, and he lost heavily. Just as he seemed

about to recoup himself, hours having passed since the first report, the sentinel again appeared at the door, and asked what he was to do with the Jew. Everybody knows the superstition of gamblers, who, being disturbed, immediately fear to lose 'la veine'—so the captain, furious at being interrupted just as his luck returned, shouted, 'Why, d—— the Jew, hang him!' The Russian soldier is the most mechanical machine in the world—I do not say that to his disparagement. It is well known that a great French general said with regard to a Russian soldier, 'It is not sufficient to kill him; you have to push him before he falls, dead though he be.' I only mean that a Russian soldier never reasons, as we shall soon see. The captain went on playing until the morning, when, suddenly remembering the prisoner, he called the soldier and said, 'Bring in the Jew!' 'The Jew?' said the amazed soldier; 'but I hanged him as you ordered!' 'What?' said the captain; 'you have committed murder!' He arrested him, and the court-martial condemned him to death. The judgment went up to the Emperor. Inquiring into the circum-

stances before signing so serious a document, and learning how matters really stood, the Emperor decided that the soldier who, without reasoning, had so implicitly obeyed his superior, however extraordinary the order, was to be made a corporal; that the officer who, while on duty, for the sake of gambling had given the murderous order, was to be sent to Siberia, and that his pay was to go to the family of the poor Jew who had so iniquitously been executed. . . .

Another instance of his terrible Imperial justice is this: A young man of one of the highest aristocratic families was private secretary to his Majesty, and it was his duty to submit to the Emperor for final judgment the decisions of the highest court. In a case where two noble families had quarrelled about a strip of land, the Emperor gave his decision in favour of one family. Whether the secretary was bribed by inferior considerations, or by the prayer of a lovely girl, or whatever his reasons, he gave out the Emperor's decision reversed. The nobleman who held the Emperor's personal promise, of course applied to him to ask what was the

reason of this unexpected reversal. The Emperor, remembering his decision, at once sent for the secretary, and asked whether he had executed his orders. 'Certainly, Sire,' he replied. 'I don't believe I decided thus,' said the Emperor. 'Certainly, your Majesty did.' 'Now listen to me; you know that I always note on a small bit of paper what important decision I take.' Jaee Bohoo! (by the Lord!) the secretary swore that *was* the decision. 'Well,' said the Emperor, 'I will search for it.' Unfortunately for the secretary, the fatal strip was found, and it was as Nicholas remembered it. Now the secretary threw himself at his master's feet. 'No,' said the Emperor, 'it is now too late; leave the room;' and Siberian mines for life gave the unfortunate man all possible leisure to think of the danger of disobeying so powerful a master.

So far the Emperor Nicholas. In Austria the great Emperor Joseph II. conceived the idea of founding a German opera, and made Mozart write the 'Entführung aus dem Serail,' which had an immense success, and established his fame still more solidly. Yet he barely made money enough to live on. The price to

be paid for an opera was then one hundred ducats, *i.e.*, fifty pounds. The time consumed in consulting about the libretto, composing it, rehearsing it, and at last bringing it out, left not much of the funds at his disposal. Besides, he was too sincere, which, like every virtue, may be carried too far. Not everybody has the luck of Gluck, who came once to Court while the Emperor and an Archduke sang his (Gluck's) 'Alceste,' and he made such a grimace that the Emperor asked him: 'Do we not do it to your liking?' 'To my liking?' said Gluck; 'I am as bad a pedestrian as any man can be, but I would rather run twenty miles than have my works performed like this if I could help it.' And the Emperor respected him for it. Had he said so to the Emperor Nicholas, he might have been furnished with free apartments in the subterranean mines of Tobolsk. Mozart had not an atom of that humility about him, by which sometimes absolute mediocrity gets on. Weigl, an Austrian composer, had written a quartet which the Emperor Francis felt called upon to lead, only that he played his part all through without taking the slight-

est notice of accidentals, until the composer, nearly on his knees, advanced, and most reverentially said, 'Would your Majesty grant my humble prayer for a most gracious F sharp?'

Perhaps the Emperor did, or he might have done like a young lady who once came into a music-shop asking for a new *pièce de salon.* The clerk asked her would she mind if it was a little difficult, for instance, in five sharps. 'Oh no,' she said, 'I shan't mind, because when there are more than two, I never play them.' One may imagine the effect. Mozart never took much heed to whom he spoke. Hasenhut, a theatrical manager, made up his mind to give Mozart's 'Entführung.' At the rehearsal, both a viola and a violin player were missing. So Hasenhut himself took a violin, and some little spectator who had strayed in, offered to take the viola. They began playing, but after half an hour the stranger threw down the viola, and said, 'With such a jackass (Krautesel) there is no getting on,' which was not very gratifying to the director, who, however, continued. The rehearsal finished all right, and the performance was

such a success that he gave a great supper to the troupe, and being informed that Mozart was in town, he invited him. And he came. But the first thing the manager said to him was, 'I am sure I am not mistaken ; it was you who played the viola at the rehearsal.' 'To be sure,' said Mozart ; 'and I may not have made a very courteous remark to you, but scratching false notes as you do, drives me out of my senses.'

I follow Mozart as child, youth, and young man, step by step, seeking to explain the unheard-of monstrosity that a man of such transcendent genius — writing masterpiece after masterpiece — should never have got out of the most oppressive difficulties, and should die a miserably poor man full of debts, while his works literally brought millions after his death. There was not the famous ingratitude of people who will not recognise a prophet in his own country ; there was not a complicated intrigue of powerful enemies, for he had lots of friends. It was solely his inability to recognise the practical side of life and to use his friends' advice properly. It is all very fine to say a lofty genius

like that thinks only of creating immortal works; what does he know, and how can he be supposed to think of butcher and baker? Charming! But so long as a genius is bound to inhabit a machine whose texture wants daily keeping up by what must be bought from baker and butcher, and so long as the interruption of this thoroughly prosaic proceeding has the effect of destroying the very brain which is the seat of the genius, so long will the 'lofty purpose' be dragged down as it were with heavy, but not-to-be-got-rid-of weights, and there is no choice left but to pay the penalty. In life everything is a bargain. You want to be romantic, to run out in the moonshine, dream of 'her' and sigh to the clouds? Do, by all means. Only next morning you will sneeze, have a headache, and wish the moon and the clouds anywhere. You have had your pleasure—'pay for it.' On another day you want to take a constitutional; the weather is fine. You walk out, revolving in your mind your next great work. Your prosaic servant, opening the door for you, timidly ventures a suggestion: Won't you take an umbrella?

What, an umbrella! Ah, bah! What does it matter to a young man even if there should come a shower, which is most unlikely? Out you go. A slight suspicious wind warns you. Oh, never mind. On you walk. It gets a little darker. You laugh at it. But when you are a good two miles away from your house, down comes the shower, which you defied. A cab? No possibility. The very cabman who passed you an hour before, humbly keeping his whip up, most invitingly soliciting your patronage, 'Hansom, sir; hansom?' etc., passes you when you are hailing him, with the utmost insolence, never even deigning to say, 'Engaged.' Find out for yourself; who are you? He's got a fare. How often does it happen in life, that people who have been crouching at your feet when they wanted you, suddenly pass you without turning even their heads. They have got a fare. Anyway, home you come. Your devoted servant sees you drenched, and is generous enough not to remind you that you were warned. You try to get dry and warm. The faithful one brings you hot brandy and does his best. Very fine! The next day

you get up with lumbago, rheumatism, and a thanksgiving if it is not gout. Why? You have had your own will, you have played the youngster. 'Pay for it.' And so poor Mozart paid, and rather heavily.

It may, perhaps, surprise people to hear that after Mozart had so indignantly torn himself away from Aloysia Weber, who pretended not to recognise him, he should, after all, have married another Miss Weber, her sister. But you must understand that a mother who has several daughters beats Talleyrand in diplomacy when it is a question of getting rid of her sweet burden; and one of the most effective means with a young bachelor is to become his landlady. Then the daughter has an opportunity to do him all those little services which render the helpless stronger sex the submissive victim of the most unjustly so-called weaker sex. 'My daughter will bring you your coffee in the morning. We are too poor to keep many servants, and my daughters are most strictly educated and must use their hands, and not read novels and think only of dressing,' etc.; and occasionally there comes a hint that her unpretending daughter

will make the best of wives. She wants nothing; she is not accustomed to spend money; on the contrary, she will be the greatest saving to her husband; and these are the very reasons which Mozart gave to his father, who was frightened to hear that his son, incapable of earning a really sufficient income for himself, was about to marry a penniless woman, and burden himself with the only blessing that Providence is sure to grant to poor people—an unlimited number of children.

'He could not manage for himself,' he said; 'he threw away money, which an intelligent wife would know how to save, and to employ well,' and so on. 'She is well-made,' he wrote; 'not fascinating, but pretty, always very poorly clad, but irreproachably clean (of course). She can do all her dresses and bonnets; *she even does her own hair* every day.' Is this not sufficient to pay all the expenses of the household? The father was anxious lest the son had been caught landlady-fashion. But how could he hope to make a man listen to reason who was in love? According to the fashion of those days, the mother of the beloved one exacted a written

promise of engagement. Mozart wrote it, and then came the *grand coup.* When he put it into the hands of the mother, the daughter got hold of it, tore it to pieces, and tragically exclaimed, 'I want no agreement; your word is sufficient guarantee!' After that, what could Mozart do? Marry the 'divine girl,' of course. And so he did, at the age of twenty-six, after having enforced the practical father's reluctant consent.

His life after this was a perpetual struggle to get money—a continuous fight for existence. The Emperor, who liked him very well, would not substantially support him. He gave him an honorary conductor's appointment, with eighty pounds a year. 'Too much for what I do,' said Mozart; 'too little for what I could do.' This giant in music, and baby in life, went every day to give a young lady two hours' lesson without being paid for it; and was taken in by anybody who took the trouble. Aristocratic smiles or invitations were often all the reward he received, with a family to sustain; nor was his case an exceptional one.

I know of a pianist who, at one of those small German Courts, played one evening no less than nine pieces. At the end of a week he was asked which he would prefer, 200 marks (£10) or a present? He, imagining that the present would be a diamond pin, or some such thing, said he left it to her Highness to give him a suitable souvenir; and her Highness, immensely pleased to see so much talent combined with so much disinterestedness, was graciously pleased to invite him to tea—*et voilà tout*. But his misadventure bore good fruit; for another pianist to whom he told his story, and who played at the same Court, and was asked whether he would prefer a decoration or 200 marks, tartly replied, 'A cross (of the order proposed) costs fifteen or sixteen marks, let us say twenty; so give me the order and 180 marks, and we'll cry quits.' Such practical sense would have been a great help to Mozart. It is very elevating to read of the poet who showed the labourer, who had attached Pegasus to a cart, what the divine horse could do under a true poet's guidance. Charming, so long as the horse with his wings flying towards heaven required

no oats, nor the rider any food; but for horses with less wings and more stomach, and for men with less poetry and more wants, flying doesn't answer.

On one occasion when a Polish Count had listened with pleasure to a quintet which Mozart had written for him, and asked him to write a new trio, Mozart acceded, and the Count sent him fifty pounds. After some time the Count met him, and asked whether the trio was done. 'Not yet,' said Mozart; 'I have not been in the right mood for it.' 'But you were in the right mood,' said the Count, 'to accept fifty pounds for it.' 'You can have them back,' Mozart at once replied, and he returned the money, keeping absolutely nothing for the quintet which he had delivered. But if I insist on the weakness of artists who allow themselves to be victimized by unscrupulous aristocrats who pay with a smile or an invitation, I am fully aware of the great mistake some singers have committed in England, to the detriment of the whole profession, by charging such high prices for their services that they rendered an evening party—formerly a great resource in the season—next

to impossible. They thereby created, to their own irreparable loss, the amateur performer; because certain ladies found out that they derived more pleasure from hearing themselves sing, than from paying Italian singers, and for the matter of that English singers, at the rate of £150 or £200 each. The *soirées* for the professional singers disappeared, and they can truly say that they have eaten the goose with the golden eggs. The carelessness of Mozart went so far, that a number of his compositions, written as presents to young ladies, were copied by music-sellers, engraved, and sold without his permission, and of course without any payment to the composer; but he never interfered, and quietly allowed himself to be robbed.

Mozart was fond of dancing, of billiards, and of skittles. His doctor insisted on these healthy exercises. It is true that he was fond of 'punch' too, when he composed at night, but it is not true that he indulged too much. On the other hand, I am sorry to say that it is not exactly impossible that he might now and then have given a slight *coup de canif* in

the *contrat de mariage.* Nor can I understand Mozart's enthusiasm for freemasonry. Those who know what it is all about will probably fancy that two masons, like two Roman augurs of old, cannot meet without winking and smiling at each other. All the fearful dangers which one hears a mason has to brave at his initiation, the usual tests of courage which he has to undergo, the long apprenticeship through which it is supposed he has to pass—all this, looked in the face, is perhaps less terrible, less mysterious, and less imposing! The only man I ever heard speak seriously about the power of masons' lodges was the late Pope Pio IX. I had a private audience of him, and perhaps I may be allowed to give a little idea of the ceremonial which those who are received in private by the Holy Father have to go through. The first thing is, you must be so recommended to him or to some very powerful member of his Court that your demand for a private audience may be granted. When this is done you have to go to the Chamberlain and get your card, your day, your hour. Then you come at the appointed

time into the room preceding the audience-chamber, where, as everywhere else, you wait with those who are to be received until your turn comes. But when that comes the difference is great.

At the Spanish Court, the strictest model of observance of etiquette, there are three grand *salles*—magnificent rooms, the ceilings painted by Murillo, the furniture old and majestic. There, unless you have a very high order, or your position entitles you to precedence, you have to wait and slowly proceed from one room to the other as the persons received make room for others to advance. At last you come to the *salle d'audience*, preceded by a small room, in which you find some Spanish grandee in brilliant uniform, with sword drawn; and until he lowers the point and tells you to pass, you dare not enter. But once there, you are usually made so much at home, that you have continually to remind yourself that those who speak to you are Sovereigns; whereas at certain other Courts the distance never diminishes, or only diminishes with certain favoured exceptions. But with the Pope it is different; at least it

was when I was in Rome. The Chamberlain opens the door for you, loudly calling your name and titles; a *cameriere* follows behind you with a large tray, on which are laid the objects, ivory, gold, silk, silver, anything that you have brought with a view to the Pope blessing it, that you may bring it to your Catholic friends, who look at it from that moment as a relic. You hold in your hand whatever offering you have to lay at the feet of the Holy Father. Mind you, you are on the threshold; now comes the ceremonial. On the door-step you have to kneel down; you then get up and make three steps and kneel down again; another three steps and you kneel at the feet of the *padre santo*, and get hold of the hem of his robe, which he either lets you kiss in all humility, or he takes you by the hand, lifts you up, and after blessing you, stretches out his hand towards the tray which the *cameriere* holds, and pronounces the sacred blessing: 'In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiriti Sancti. Amen.' Whereupon the *cameriere* with the tray disappears, the door shuts, and you are left alone. The room is a very small one,

nothing like the big hall where the general receptions of over 2,000 people take place; it contains a simple table and chair. A white cotton dress and a red cap are all the uniform of the head of the Catholic Church. He then asks: 'Do you prefer to speak Italian or French?'—the two languages which are easy to him. After your reply, the conversation begins; and it was in the course of such conversation that Pio IX. told me: Times were very hard—people were very deficient in faith. By-and-by the masonic lodges came in for a share of his reprobation as revolutionary and atheistic societies. I know not what evil the French lodges under Prince Napoleon may have done, but so far as the English lodges go, I told his Holiness I would be responsible that there was no intrigue other than charity.

I was told when coming out that I had been thirty-three minutes and a half—a most unusual favour. Anyhow, having to pass to Cardinal Antonelli, I went upstairs, and I shall certainly never forget the few moments in which he was kind enough to let me enjoy

his superior mind, his vast knowledge, and the biting satire with which he favoured certain Ministers whose support of the Church he had reason to doubt. I am speaking of the time when the States of the Church were not taken by Victor Emmanuel, so our conversation would now seem rather *passée*. But, at the time, I wrote down in my diary every word the Cardinal had said, and for the next eight years I saw line by line, word by word, everything happen which he had foretold. He was not only Minister of Foreign Affairs, but Custos of the Vatican. I expressed to him my admiration of the five pictures in the Vatican, and the happiness I felt in seeing only these, and devoting all my time to them. 'That is exactly,' he said, 'my idea of a gallery. You can readily fancy, if I wished to fill the palace with pictures, how easily I could do so. But I have the five greatest pictures that exist, and if anywhere quality outweighs quantity, it is here.' He was a very spare man, and thin as he seemed to be, his face was thinner still; but his eyes—the size, the deep colour, and the penetrating look! The whole man lived

in his eyes; and you felt that if you had a secret he would see it through your skin and through your veins. He gave me a card to see how the mosaics were manufactured—at that time a great secret, consequently the admission was an exceptional favour. Then he showed me his '*joujous*,' as he called his collection of precious stones. I don't know how many millions of liras they were worth, but—— Where is Mozart? I am totally astray—away from my subject, and must, post-haste, come back to it.

Nothing can be more gratifying than to see a genius—and if ever man deserved the denomination, Mozart was that man—so idolized by the pe ople that they tell numbers of stories to corroborate his exceptional greatness; but there is one thing to be desired—that the story be true. I remember, when a child, having seen a new piece in a theatre where it was the detestable fashion of that time to mock at the Jews, as if all they did was to sell old clothes, and as if they all had crooked noses, and as if even at that time, notwithstanding the oppression they underwent, they had not, in art and science, pro-

duced great men like Mendelssohn the philosopher, Meyerbeer the composer, and others. But at this theatre that was the standing bad joke. A new piece, however, was announced —'The Canonization of Israel.' And I remember to this day how a poor Jew said to another poor man, but a Catholic: 'You always speak ill of the Jews, but what would you say if I told you that I have an uncle who does more good than ever any Christian did, who lends money without any interest, who has never taken a penny from anyone but what was strictly his due, and who, having lent once a considerable sum on plate, absolutely refused to take one shilling interest, only exactly what he lent? What would you say to that?' 'What would I say?' 'Yes.' 'That it is not true.'

So I am sorry to have to explode two very generally, not to say universally, accepted anecdotes which, through perpetual repetition, have become history. One is, that after a rehearsal of 'Don Giovanni,' not having the overture ready, Mozart went home and composed it during the night, a feat which, even if true, would be by no means astounding on the part

of a genius who had accomplished what he had in the way of improvisation. But it is not true. Although the overture was not written down, it was not because none was composed, but because, on the contrary, he had composed three, which he carried in his head, and out of which he did not know how to choose. When he had made up his mind, he went home, and, aided by his wife, who tried to amuse him when he was giving way to sleep, he wrote it out. The mysterious story of the grey ghost, who shortly before Mozart's death came to command a requiem, is the other tale. With numerous embellishments, the grey gentleman has been changed into a supernatural being, a spectre, and what not, even into Mozart's presentiment of approaching death. It has been satisfactorily proved that it was Count Walsegg, who, through his messenger Leutgeb, ordered and paid fifty pounds for the Requiem.

As to 'Don Giovanni,' the payment was ten pounds to Da Ponte for the libretto, and £22 10s. to Mozart for the music. The performance, which took place at Prague

on October 29th, 1787, gave all possible satisfaction, but Mozart had severely reprimanded the singers at rehearsal. He had even resorted to 'heroic' means in at least one instance. Zerlina, supposed to be attacked by Don Giovanni behind the scene, has to shriek. Now her cry was so tame that Mozart left the piano at which he conducted, and told the orchestra to go on without him. He went on the stage and told Zerlina not to mind him, and to sing her part. When the right moment came he jumped at her and caught her round the waist. The frightened woman shrieked aloud. 'That is it,' he said; 'that's how you must shout.' It was not in London, as has lately been stated, but in New York, that the great Garcia, in the year 1829, gave 'Don Giovanni,' and at the end of the first act rushed on the stage, sword in hand, to tell them that it was a shame so to spoil a masterpiece, and made them begin the finale again, and brought it to a happy termination. This Garcia was the father of three children, the famous Malibran, Madame Viardot, and Manuel Garcia, the teacher of Jenny Lind. Madame Viardot,

twenty years ago, bought here in London the original MS. score of 'Don Giovanni,' and has it now in her possession.

I must pass over the 'Clemenza di Tito,' and all Mozart did down to his last opera, 'Die Zauberflöte,' given a few months before his death, this being perhaps the only really German opera which Mozart had written. He went home after the performance to write the Requiem for which he had already received payment, and which, therefore, he considered himself in honour bound to compose without further delay.

It is now my sad duty to describe the beginning of the end; for care, the uninterrupted fight for bare existence, and disappointment that his latest works did not immediately meet with the recognition he had hoped for, began to tell upon him. Through continual creation he had weakened his energies, which required to be kept up physically with sufficient comfort and freedom from care. His forces gave way, and, feeling his weakness, he worked day and night at completing his Requiem. His wife, whose faults I have not disguised, but who, with the genius of nursing born in

women, watched his declining strength, and tried to get him away from work, could not restore his previous gaiety and vitality. Once she nearly compelled him to take a drive with her to the Prater (a Viennese park, so called from 'prata,' meadows), and he began to speak of death, and assured her that he felt he wrote the Requiem for himself; he even hinted at the possibility of having been poisoned by some jealous rival. Fainting fits came on more and more frequently, so that she, frightened with the idea that the Requiem had impressed him in so melancholy a manner, took away the score, and forced, so to say, a little rest on him. Feeling a little better, he asked for the score of his Requiem, which she then restored to him; but his hands and feet began to swell. He had to go to bed and to remain there. The success of his 'Zauberflöte' led to the hope that henceforth he would have less difficulty in his affairs. While he was ill, offers came from different sides to ensure him an annuity for a few of his compositions, but the offers arrived too late: the body was exhausted, and seeing death continually before

him, although he calmly awaited the end, he could not look at the necessity to leave his wife and two children quite unprovided for without great anxiety. He sang now and then an air from the 'Zauberflöte,' then he asked for his Requiem, but when he arrived at the Lacrymosa, he turned in tears to his pupil, Süssmayer, and said: 'You remember I told you it was for myself I wrote it.' His sister-in-law arrived on December 4th, in the evening, and he said to her: 'Remain here during the night; you must see me die: my wife must not remain alone with me.' In the evening the doctor came, and said that there was no hope, but ordered cold water on the head, which, however, seemed too strong a remedy; Mozart lost consciousness and never recovered it. In his delirium he puffed out his cheeks and seemed to imitate the kettle-drum accompanying his opera. Suddenly, towards midnight, he rose up in bed: his eyes glared fixedly at the ceiling, then he fell slowly back, turned towards the wall, and seemed to fall asleep.

At one o'clock a.m. of December 5th, in the year 1791, he was no more; he died one

month and a half before having completed his thirty-sixth year. His coffin and funeral cost fourteen shillings, and for the hearse five shillings were paid. There being no money, Mozart was thrown in a pauper's grave! which received twenty coffins, and was every ten years emptied that it might be refilled. On his stone might well be written the words, 'Ingrata patria ne ossa quidem habeas.' His wife, sick in bed on the day of the funeral, so soon as she could get out, went to the cemetery to pray upon his grave. But no one knew where it was. The grave-digger, the only man who could have given the desired information, died two days after the funeral, and this is all that is known of the remains of the greatest musical genius the world ever saw!

Therefore the monument erected to his memory does not cover his body. His real monument is his work, and it is erected in the hearts of his admirers all the world over. His position in musical art, as compared with that giant Beethoven, can perhaps alone be expressed by the comparison of Raphael with Michael Angelo. But why compare?

Is not all that is great and sweet in music comprised in the name of the immortal genius, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart!

The name of Mozart will scarcely be pronounced before any *dilettante* of this or any music-loving centre in Europe, but 'Don Giovanni' will at once rise to everybody's mind, the most popular opera written in the last century, and which remains a stock-piece with Italian, French, German, and English opera companies. It has continued to be so during the whole of this century, and although it enchanted the fathers and grandfathers of this generation in all countries, it remains yet fresh and eagerly listened to, while operas have vanished by the score which ten or twenty years ago were all the rage.

This popularity is not only due to the reason that it is composed by the immortal Mozart; other operas by the same master, full of melody, full of the enticing simplicity and charm which was the basis too of his personal character, have never reached the same degree of popularity; take, for instance, his magnificent 'Idomeneo.' Truth to say,

it is very difficult in many cases to find out why one work of a composer should become so much more popular than others, although they seem to possess the same charm. Balfe has written twenty-three operas, of which one had for more than a quarter of a century the greatest run known in nearly every country of Europe. Two, even three others have been very successful too; but who knows even the name of eighteen or twenty others? Why are Dickens's 'Pickwick Papers' and Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair' known to the merest tyro, in preference to so many other good works of the same authors? It is a matter of taste, and, as it was said two thousand years ago, 'De gustibus non est disputandum;' or, as our neighbours on the other side of the Channel say, 'Taste and colours must not be discussed.' Far be it from me to underrate the attractive power of the 'Zauberflöte,' or the great charm of the 'Nozze di Figaro.' Yet! yet—the popularity of 'Don Giovanni' surpasses them. It may perhaps be explained, if not by A + B, yet by some excellent reasons. First of all, there are two powerful elements

of popularity in the *libretto;* namely, a ghost story, which attracts a great part of the public in general, and family gossip, which attracts a goodly section of it too; an argument proved by the eagerness with which the police reports are devoured in the daily papers. A statue that nods and speaks and —an especial attraction—executes Divine justice by delivering the culprit straight away to his punishment into the place paved with good intentions; an outraged lady vindicated in the end; a mocking servant who, though a coward, betrays his master's secrets in most voluble and amusing language, unrolling no less than three yards of a list containing the names of all the damsels beloved by his master, 'mille e trè;'—all these together keep up the interest to the very last act, where the ghost appears *in personâ* to make the guilty man atone for his heresy, and finally precipitates him into the flames supposed to purify his soul from sin!

Take then the music! What is it that attracts people in operatic music? Melody, originality, science, power, taste, combination, interesting and insinuating ideas, brilliant

solos, duets, *ensemble* pieces in fine, and chorus! Where is there an opera like 'Don Giovanni' combining *all these qualities* in so high a degree? It would have been a wonder indeed if the opera had not conquered a position of the highest popularity. Although, like most masterpieces, it was not at once recognised as a revelation, yet it worked itself into the first rank as soon as it was understood, and maintained this position thenceforth with a firm hold.

Much has been said about the progress of music since Mozart's time, and a certain clique has especially given out that the music of the future is a 'New Art.' The principle, of which this new school is so proud, is, that drama and music are so combined, so intertwined in those operas, that there is not a note without a meaning; whereas in numbers of old operas the text might be entirely changed, and if only the length of verses fitted, the same music might be adapted to any subject. Possibly this reproach may be deserved by some of the lightest Italian operas, cut and confectioned after a certain pattern, and that pattern, I admit, not always a grand

or a distinguished one. But Mozart? But 'Don Giovanni'? See the principal figures: Don Giovanni himself, recklessly on pleasure bent, overbearing with all the effervescent blood of youth and health, troubled by no scruple of conscience; listen when he sings the praises of champagne in sparkling notes, how the cork pops out in quick brilliant chords—listen to that masterpiece of mock-sentimental love in the Sérénade, with the pizzicato on the violin mimicking the guitar, that unfailing companion of the Spanish lover under the balcony; take then the others, and notice particularly, how every character from beginning to end keeps the design of his or her prominent qualities or faults before the audience. Leporello, a coward, as bad as his master, but minus his pluck, committing every indignity, fully aware of the wrong he does, not with the scarcely admissible but anyway extenuating circumstance that he benefits by it, but simply because he has not the courage to refuse obedience to his master's wicked orders. Hear the impatient accents of his first air, 'Notte è giorno faticar,' concluding with the

resolve to throw up the position, and then his long story of his master's numberless amourettes : can mockery and gossip be interpreted by music in a more *spirituelle* manner ? As to Don Ottavio, he in reality plays rather a pitiable figure ; for both Don Juan and Leporello, the first by his reckless daring, the second by the misadventures into which his cowardice leads him, interest or amuse the audience. But Don Ottavio does no good, and no harm ; he loves Donna Anna, but that has very little to do with the public, who like deeds, not words. And yet in the one air he has to sing, 'Il mio tesoro,' what tenderness, what charm ! How graceful is that music by the side of the terrific accents of the statue marching to the supper, tramp, tramp—tramp, tramp, to the spectral accompaniment of the brass, all the more effective because it is so sparingly used in the rest of the opera, and singing in as simple, grand and terrifying accents as the others do in light, mundane and enticing style.

See then the ladies. The *bravura* air of the proud Donna Anna, the *cheval de bataille* of all German *prima donnas* who *can* sing it ;

the, I might say, intentionally unsympathetic air of Donna Elvira, who is as uninteresting as any woman can be who continually cries over the pranks of a too-lighthearted husband. And Zerlina? Is it possible to give simpler idyllic, I might say arcadian, expression to a young innocent girl than her air, 'Batti batti bel Masetto;' or more persuasive accents than her second air, 'Vedrai Carino'? And is it to be wondered at that all the world over, the famous duet, 'Là ci darem la mano,' has been sung by amateurs and professionals, and redemanded by every audience in Europe and America? Why, this is the very thing which Wagner pretends to have invented in his 'new art:' every word finds its exact expression in the music. First, that insinuating motive of the would-be seducer. Then comes Zerlina's hesitation—shall she go? 'Vorrei e non vorrei;' and suddenly, when she has made up her mind, that brilliant animated Allegro in $\frac{6}{8}$, which one could guess the meaning of without hearing the words. Shall I quote the ball, the famous minuet, the trio 'delle Maschere,' the innumerable details as witty as music can

produce, and as charming as ornamental art ever furnished? And the chorus! No reader of these lines will perhaps ever have an opportunity of hearing the electric effect on an audience which that chorus of the 'Libertà' can produce, as I heard it. It was in the year 1848. Austria, then the most priest-ridden, censor-tyrannized country in Europe, more unhappy even than Russia, where the want of education did not allow the lower classes to feel their shame as they did in Austria—where books on constitutional freedom, perpetually smuggled in, notwithstanding the imminent danger of discovery, nursed and increased the eagerness for liberty in every educated individual—Austria had suddenly, without arms, without serious fighting, except the loss of a very few individuals, from Monday, March the 13th, to Wednesday evening, the 15th, obtained by a peaceful albeit universal revolution—on the Monday, the resignation of Prince Metternich, who was considered the arch-enemy of liberty; on the Tuesday, the Garde Nationale, and freedom of the Press, consequently abrogation of the hated censorship; and on Wednesday, a Con-

stitution with the representative system. The people were so mad with joy that strangers spoke to each other in the street; for a week mankind were all brothers, the intoxication of happiness had made all men equal. Then the first opera given was 'Don Giovanni,' with the chorus 'Libertà'! Imagine the over-boiling excitement; imagine a country in which even the word 'freedom' had been scratched out by the censor of every paper, of every drama—in Schiller's 'William Tell,' where they have to say, 'The country has become the grave of freedom,' the actor was obliged to say, 'A grave has it become;' he dared not pronounce the word that might conjure up the spectre—imagine in that country, after everything had been forbidden, denied, repressed—freedom for everybody to speak as he liked, to write what he pleased, and at such a moment the chorus singing 'Viva la libertà!' It was encored again and again; people embraced each other in the stalls, in the gallery; the enthusiasm was such, that with exemplary abnegation the male chorus singers even went so far as to embrace the ballet girls—'en tout bien, tout honneur,' of

course—and if ever it is given to a spirit to see what is done in this mortal world, the purest joy, the most enviable satisfaction must have been that of the composer of that great work, Mozart!

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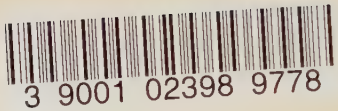
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